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The Priest and Saint Paul

AN INTERPRETATION OF SAINT PAUL'S WRITINGS BEARING ON THE PRIESTHOOD

BY

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TRANSLATED BY

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Author's Preface

MANY excellent books for priests have appeared in recent years, and if I dare to add still one more to their number, it is because I think that with these books as with other things a change is sometimes welcome.

Many books for priests follow the life of Christ, and quite rightly too, for our Lord and Saviour, the Eternal High Priest, will always be the first model for all priests. Still, we may draw rich profit from a purely human type of priest, because, being taken from among men [1] and affected by everything human, such an one bears greater similarity to us than He who was at the same time divine.

Of all these human types St. Paul deserves the first consideration; for we know no priestly life that was richer in deeds, results, struggles, virtues, and success, no life that produced more elevating and fruitful results than his. St. John Chrysostom, the great admirer of St. Paul says: "As I keep hearing the Epistles of the Blessed Paul read, and that twice every week, and even three or four times . . . gladly do I enjoy the spiritual trumpet, and get roused and warmed with desire at recognizing the voice so dear to me, and seem to fancy him all but present to my sight, and to behold him conversing with me." [2]

I do not intend now to write a "life" of St. Paul, but

[1] Heb. 5:1.

[2] Preface to St. Paul's Epistles: Lesson iv, Dom. II post Epiph.

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only to apply words and experiences of St. Paul to the priestly life of to-day. From the rich material I could have chosen small finely finished "pictures," but I preferred as often as possible to let the Saint speak for himself; for, in the first place, to reproduce St. Paul's thoughts in strange words is only to water them down, and, secondly, a rich selection of his sublime thoughts and feelings may be welcome to many who, on account of their manifold occupations, are debarred from an exhaustive consideration of the Saint's writings. The Father of the Church just mentioned writes: "I grieve and am pained that all people do not know this man as much as they ought to know him: but some are so far ignorant of him as not even to know for certainty the number of his Epistles. And this comes not of incapacity, but of their not having the will to be continually conversing with the blessed man." [3]

The manner of treatment I have chosen had its difficulties. Repetitions could not always be avoided, and the rich material could not always be put into a fitting form. Therefore I must crave indulgence.

The following addresses have grown from many years of meditation on the Saint's epistles, and were first given as discourses at monthly recollections of the clergy. The result of this is a form of words and a somewhat too emphatic manner of exposition which may make a somewhat unpleasing impression on one who merely reads, but may be of use to one who really meditates.

And these expositions are for *Meditation*, for every word of the Saint contains more than one thought;

[3] l. c.

every phrase a sentence, and every sentence provides matter for a whole sermon. In order not to increase the size of the book still more, only a portion of the words of St. Paul dealt with could be treated in detail; it must be left to the meditative spirit of the reader to extract the full force of the rest.

OTTO COHAUSZ, S.J.

BRESLAU, *Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul,* 1919.

Translator's Preface

THE name of the Rev. Otto Cohausz, S.J., may be unfamiliar to English readers, yet it is well known in Germany, where Father Cohausz enjoys a reputation as a powerful orator and able apologist of Catholic doctrine. He is also well known for his Conferences, Missions and Retreats, while his writings have met with great success. Apart from his contributions to various periodicals and his other works, he is the author of several books of meditations. Among these may be mentioned *Aus den Klostermauern*—a series of meditations for Religious, which has run through several editions, as also has his book of conferences for women teachers—*Im Gefolge Jesu.* During the past few years Father Cohausz has been bringing out a series of books entitled, "Meditations on Holy Writ," which are meant to make people more familiar with the Scriptures and the wealth of spiritual instruction which they contain. The first three volumes, written by Father Cohausz himself, have appeared and deal respectively with "The Acts of the Apostles," the "Life of Saul," and the "Epistle to the Romans."

The book *Paulus, ein Buch für Priester,* of which this volume is a translation, appeared first in 1919 and has run into several editions. When I read it, I found it so helpful, that my desire was to see the work appear in English dress, in the hope that others might derive some similar help from it. It is in that hope that the present translation is published.

It has been my endeavour to preserve the full force

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and meaning of the original. The only places where I have departed from the original are in substituting the name of Cardinal Newman for that of Goethe, and in the omission of two or three short sentences which were neither necessary to the thought or argument, nor applicable to our English circumstances.

My thanks are due to Father Cohausz and his publishers for their kind permission to translate the book. I wish also to express my gratitude to the Rev. A. Keogh, S.J., of Heythrop College, Oxon., for his considerable help in the translation, and also to any others who by their encouragement or in other ways have helped me in the work.

LAURENCE P. EMERY.

OSCOTT COLLEGE
BIRMINGHAM
27th May, 1927.

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THE PRIEST AND SAINT PAUL

CHAPTER I

"A Vessel of Election"

THE words with which God put an end to the hesitation of Ananias about receiving young Saul were very important: "Go thy way; for this man is to me *a vessel of election,* to carry my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel. For I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake." [1]

The Apostle Paul was certainly *a vessel of election.* In few people in the world's history has the mystery of special choice been so powerfully shown as in the case of Paul. His personality, his mission, and all the events of his life bore clearly in every direction the mark of God's special favour.

I

A great task was set before this man, and he accomplished it with the greatest conceivable skill.

[1] Acts 9:15.—The Scriptural texts are taken from the Douay Version except in some few cases, when I have used the Westminster Version, a new Catholic translation (Longmans, Green & Co.). This latter is indicated by the letters W. V.—TRANSLATOR.

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As "Apostle of Christ," "Teacher of the Gentiles," "Minister of the Church," and "Preacher of the Gospel," he was called to prepare the way for the new Christian Gospel.

But the new religion needed, first of all, to be *further worked out and to have greater scope.*

Christ had merely sown the grains of seed, which needed first to be strongly developed. For although the world had heard the words of Our Lord, it had not grasped what lay hidden in their depth. A mind with a theological training was necessary for this, and so it was that Christ called the highly educated pupil of Gamaliel to join the fishermen of Galilee. Often enough Christian ascetical writers and preachers, relying on certain passages of St. Paul, have too much watered down the importance of learning for religion. Yet, the fact remains that the most learned and most highly educated of the apostles has influenced most deeply and lastingly the entire development of the Christian religion.

The convert scribe with his quick and penetrating mind was to grasp the new dogmas, to place them in relation with the thought of other religions; he was to define them clearly, to stamp them into definite formulas, to work out their implications, and to show their application to practical life.

The former zealot for the law accomplished this task with real and wonderful genius. With continually active versatility, with astonishing clearness of thought, he penetrated more than any other since him into the depths of the new knowledge, and brought to light such a wealth of deep, clearly perceived thoughts and problems as no one since has succeeded in doing. All centuries since him have had, and still have, enough

work in assorting, in polishing and fixing in their right place in the whole edifice of Christian doctrine those jewels which he brought to light.

But the new religion had not only to develop; it had also to be *freed from all dross.*

The word of God, the seed, coming from Christ's hand, was in itself free from all error, but being sunk in an earthly world for further development, it needed protection against adulteration from its surroundings. It had arisen in Judaism, it had been propagated by Jews, and after the death of its Founder it was threatened with the danger of adhering too closely to the Jewish type of religion. The Law and circumcision, forbidden foods, and obsolete ritualistic precepts threatened to encompass it; old formulas threatened to kill the new spirit in its beginnings.

Here again there was work for a strong, far-seeing man, a man of superior intellect who could perceive that outlived views had become untenable. There was need of a man who was bold and strong enough to blow up barriers in spite of all hostility and so give the newly sprung-up stream an outlet into the open. Yet a third thing remained to be done. The true religion was still somewhat confined by *national* barriers, and now it was a question of extending it, so as to be a common bond for all men: it was a question of uniting all people under the one tabernacle of God. This was a gigantic task, for not only did the heathen nations still cling to their national gods, but the Jews also—nay even the apostles of Christ, as the Acts tells us—were not able, in spite of Christ's command "Going forth, teach ye all nations," completely to get rid of the idea that the new teaching was a privileged gift to Israel.

Here again there was need of one who not only understood the drift of men's minds and the signs of the times, but who was acquainted with the pagan world, and therefore knew how to find the way to heathens, and had sufficient courage to take it. Walls had to be laid low, bridges to be thrown across the abyss. Even all this did not go far enough. The old world lay sunk in a deep and lasting sleep, enervated by scepticism and worldly-mindedness. If it was to be won to a new life, such as is the Christian life, there was need in one of the most vigorous of all times of a man who had himself been startled up, and so could waken others: there was need of one who, having been converted and confirmed himself, could move and strengthen others; who, being set on fire with the love of God, could once more enkindle the cold hearts of others; in short, of a man who had himself come from error to light, and so could reach a helping hand to other erring folk; one who had been transformed himself, and so was now in a position to direct the transformation of the great world.

II

All these requirements were to be found in happy combination in St. Paul. He, above all other apostles, was the chosen vessel to carry Christ's name before the nations and kings and the children of Israel.

With skilful hand, Providence had prepared him for this great task.

A penetrating, clear mind athirst for truth, a sensibility which was easily aroused, rising from the deepest sorrow to the brightest joy, from chiding anger to the tenderest love; an inflexible will, ever pushing on-

wards, despising all hindrances, ever fixed on the whole of its purpose, together with a large deep-feeling heart which was unremittingly enthusiastic for all that is high and noble, and strove, without tiring, for the highest moral aims—this was the dowry which God's providence had given the Apostle for his journey through life.

This powerful spirit, though, was enclosed in an insignificant weakly body which was frequently visited with pain. This too was arranged with forethought, for the danger of falling into proud self-conceit always threatens those who are raised to high positions. God wanted to prevent this from the beginning. During his whole life this man, who had been chosen for such a great mission, was to have the thought vividly before his mind that he was himself but a fragile vessel of election; that his gift was God's gift, and not sprung from himself. "And lest the greatness of the revelations should exalt me, there was given me a sting of my flesh, an angel of satan, to buffet me. For which thing thrice I besought the Lord, that it might depart from me. And he said to me: My grace is sufficient for thee: for power is made perfect in infirmity. Gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may dwell in me." [2]

Further, the *whole ordering of his life* was in accord with his future mission. He "separated me from my mother's womb." [3] The future apostle was to spread the Faith, to work for God's kingdom, and so his cradle was placed in the warm atmosphere of a devout and strictly practising Jewish family who were

[2] 2 Cor. 12:7-9. [3] Gal. 1:15.

enthusiastic for the things of God. As he was to be a debtor, not to the Jews alone, but to the Jews *and Gentiles,* he was not born among the secluded mountains of Judea, but in the open light of the Diaspora, in Tarsus, where a stream of pagan life surrounded him, where Hellenistic culture was at his command, and where at the same time the full misery of pagan idolatry and immorality stared him in the face. It was necessary to disclose the entire futility of striving after virtue by one's own unaided power, and to reveal the absolute necessity of the grace of Christ.

So this young man, so eager for virtue, was led to the most promising school of the time, that of the Pharisees, in order that, in the hot struggle against himself, which lasted for so many years, he might be convinced of the insufficiency and might experience the complete disappointment of righteousness by means of the Law.

God allowed this young man of high aims to go astray and to fail, to struggle and to fall, well knowing that with such a character, once he had recognised his errors as such, there would flow on their ebb a proportionately greater flood of zeal for the truth. For personal experience always cleaves closer than what we have merely learnt, and conquered teachers of error usually make the best fighters against error. With such a man as Paul, who professed the motto "All or nothing," this must have been true in a high degree. As long as he believed Christianity to be a delusion, he could only fight for its destruction; but as soon as he recognised it to be the only truth, he was bound to strive to make it the religion of the world. That followed from his character, a character that knew no weak compromise, no half-measures, no lukewarmness.

God allowed a long time to pass before the hour for Damascus struck. The whole course of Pharisaism had to be run before it was possible to convince this headstrong man of its untenableness.

Slowly the Lord prepared this hour of grace: and if the light of freedom flashed suddenly in its full brightness before the gates of Damascus, it was doubtless preceded by a long dawn of doubts and difficulties. The powerful results of the new religion, the confidence in victory, and the miraculous power of Our Lord's apostles, the enthusiastic spirit and religious ennoblement of the many followers of Jesus in the land, the courage of His adherents in face of sacrifice and death: all these could not remain entirely without effect on such a noble spirit as was Paul's. "What if the Nazarene were the promised Messias?" It was perhaps by means of this question, sounding now gently, now more loudly, that grace may have already made itself frequently heard, for what else is signified by "It is hard for thee to kick against the goad"? [4]

So far, grace had penetrated Saul's heart only drop by drop; but now it swelled into a stream, and all barriers fell. Torn away by it, Saul sank exhausted in the flood; and when he was once more safe on the bank, he had become Paul. The saving cut in the tumour had been made, and a skilful hand was now needed to complete the cure. God directed Saul to Ananias, the inexperienced disciple to the mature man. This again was wisely ordained, for Ananias himself had landed in the haven of Christianity only after a chequered journey through life and was therefore experienced enough to act as pilot in the storms and

[4] Acts 9: 5.

shoals which still threatened the new convert. The young Pharisee could weep away his sorrow with Ananias, reveal his doubts to him, and disclose to him the wounds of his soul. Here he felt that he was understood, comforted, and once again given back to life.

III

Paul came forth from the waters of Baptism and the instructions of Ananias another man. A freedom animated him of which he had never before dreamt; a strength coursed through him, the possibility of which he had never before thought of. This fiery spirit, however, could not be held in any longer. He had been converted himself, now he must convert others; being purified himself, he must purify others; now that he had been made to see, he must make others see. "And immediately he preached Jesus in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God." [5]

But the first onset failed. This also was according to God's wise intention: for the new vessel of election was still too much imbued with the Pharisaic spirit. He was too little formed after Christ's meek heart, and not tempered sufficiently to withstand the impact which was later to come from all sides. The furnace was still needed. "For I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake." [6] At the very beginning of his new career in life, the new Apostle had to perceive that it was not impetuosity and self-confidence, but patience and reliance on grace, which were to gain for him the finest results in God's kingdom.

[5] Acts 9:20. [6] *Ib.* v. 16.

The Spirit led him, therefore, into that school from which the great reformers of the world have ever come forth; namely, into Solitude. What transpired in those years which Paul spent in Arabia, we can surmise from the results which ensued. Not weakened, but purified in zeal, enriched by deep thought, transformed in character, carried away by the most ardent love for Christ and His cause; a burning brand which must enkindle everything, a stormy wind which must carry everything before it, in short, a genuine vessel of election—such was the young zealot who came forth from the desert into the world again. The Lord's champion was now completely equipped. A dogmatic and moral theologian, a powerful mystic, and keenly active organiser, he could now be bold enough to summon the whole world into the lists, and full of enthusiasm to cry out: "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty to God, unto the pulling down of fortifications, destroying counsels, and every height that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every understanding unto the obedience of Christ." [7]

He was not to deceive himself. Battles, hard battles raged, from his breast came groans and moans, his body seemed often to succumb, his soul to be exhausted; but on the evening of the long day of battle the hero could look back with contentment on the course of his work. The death blow had been given to Judaism, many a breach had been made in the all but unconquerable paganism; and Christianity, which on Paul's first appearance was still a glimmering light hidden

[7] 2 Cor. 10:3-5.

under a bushel, at his departure was placed on the candlestick of the world, and shone on all those who were of the great house of Nero.

The blessing which he dispensed to others came back in abundance *on himself*. How powerfully his personality came out and increased year by year amid all the work and opposition! What fortitude, what gentleness, what zeal and deep wisdom; what energy, what tender mysticism, what love of God, and what kindness; what zeal for souls, and what a spirit of self-sacrifice spoke at the close of his days from his ageing and yet ever youthful heart! With the sad cry "Unhappy man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" [8] the Apostle had begun his career; but he ended it with the victorious shout "For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor might, nor height, nor depth nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." [9] A man who from innermost conviction could say of himself: "But I am straitened between two: having a desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ, a thing by far the better. But to abide still in the flesh, is needful for you" [10]; a man who could confess "For I wished myself to be an anathema from Christ, for my brethren," [11] such an one had certainly attained the crown of sanctity and had become like to Him who was sacrificed on Golgotha.

Paul gave and continues to give his stamp to all times. He belongs to those who cannot die. The theology of all Christian centuries has been nourished

[8] Rom. 7:24. [9] *Ib.* 8:38, 39. [10] Philip 1:23, 24. [11] Rom. 9:3.

on his ideas; apostolic zeal has drawn new strength from his ardent spirit; in their struggle for virtue, innumerable saints have taken courage again at his greatness of soul. Paul, although he is dead, speaks to us still in his Epistles. He not only *was,* but he remains the "Teacher of the Gentiles." When Christ conquered him before the gates of Damascus, He had made a conquest which, humanly speaking, decided the victory of His religion. He was a real vessel of election. "By the grace of God, I am what I am; and his grace in me hath not been void, but I have laboured more abundantly than all they: yet not I, but the grace of God with me." [12]

IV

But Paul knew also how to value what he had received. He was grateful for his high vocation, and often in his epistles did he recall his wonderful conversion. "I give him thanks who hath strengthened me, even to Christ Jesus." [13] "And last of all, he was seen also by me, as by one born out of due time. For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God." [14]

He had also a deep realization of his mission. "But for this cause have I obtained mercy: that in me first Christ Jesus might show forth all patience, *for the information of them* that shall believe in him unto life everlasting. Now to the king of ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen." [15]

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[12] 1 Cor. 15: 10.
[13] 1 Tim. 1: 12.
[14] 1 Cor. 15: 8, 9.
[15] 1 Tim. 1: 16, 17.

He was resolutely earnest with his new duties. "As long indeed as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I will honour my ministry." [16] "And I made progress in the Jews' religion above many of my equals in my own nation. . . . But when it pleased him, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the Gentiles, *immediately I condescended not to flesh and blood.*" [17] Thinking Christ a dreamer, he must persecute Him to death; recognising Him as God, he must confess Him and love Him even to martyrdom: hence his detachment from everything: "But the things that were gain to me, the same I have counted loss for Christ. Furthermore, I count all things to be but loss for the excellent knowledge of Jesus Christ, my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but as dung, that I may gain Christ." [18] Hence arose his continual advance along the road he had entered upon. "Not as though I had already attained, or were already perfect; but I follow after, if I may by any means apprehend, wherein I am also apprehended by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended. But one thing I do: Forgetting the things that are behind, and stretching forth myself to those that are before, I press towards the mark, to the prize of the supernal vocation of God in Christ Jesus." [19] Hence arose his untiring activity, even to the spending of all strength for Christ. "To the weak I became weak, that I might gain the weak. I became all things to all men, that I might save all. And I do all things for the gospel's sake, that I may be made partaker thereof." [20]

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[16] Rom. 11 : 13.
[17] Gal. 1 : 14, 16.
[18] Philip. 3 : 7, 8.
[19] *Ib.* vv. 12-14.
[20] 1 Cor. 9 :22, 23.

V

"Be ye imitators of me." The priest's vocation is similar to that of the saintly Apostle. Every priest, like him, is a vessel of election. On him also God's loving eye has been resting from eternity in an especial manner. "He chose us in him before the foundation of the world." [21] He above all others has been raised to an intimate friendship with the Lord. He "hath predestinated us unto the adoption of children through Jesus Christ unto himself." [22] He also, in preference to many of the faithful, has been marked out for and steadily led on to particular holiness: "That we should be holy and unspotted in his sight." [23] How brightly the starry heaven of saintly priests shines out from all the centuries on to the confused bustle of earth! Have we made it clear to ourselves what it means to be called to this chosen band, to be called to the communion of *saints?* "But you are come to mount Sion, and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to the company of many thousands of angels, and to the church of the first-born who are written in the heavens." [24]

On each priest, as on St. Paul, God sets His special hopes. To him also is said in a greater or a lesser degree those words "to carry my name before the Gentiles." He also is to become an apostle of Jesus Christ, a preacher of the Gospel, a dispenser of the mysteries of God. By his power he should influence his times; like a trumpet he should proclaim God's counsels, and as a herald of God's majesty prepare the way for His triumphal march through the world. He too is to be

[21] Eph. 1:4. [22] *Ib.* v. 5. [23] *Ib.* v. 4. [24] Heb. 12:*22*, 23.

a vessel of election through which God gives His gifts to mankind.

And *nowadays* especially, how very similar our mission is to that of the Apostle of Tarsus. Again it is the time of empires; and civilization and commerce spread over the world. Once more East and West commingle; again there is a great commingling of nations; again there is the dawn of a new and difficult, but none the less promising, time. Once more the field of our activity is city life with its bustle and hurry, its doubts and failings. Once more it is an age like St. Paul's: let it be our care that now, as then, it will tell of victories.

But our time will be again like St. Paul's only if his spirit animates it.

There are many chosen vessels in the Lord's house; do they all prove themselves worthy of their vocation? "But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth: and some indeed unto honour, but some unto dishonour." [25]

Golden vessels, that is to say, saintly priests, as St. Paul, St. John Chrysostom, St. Athanasius, St. Francis, the Curé of Ars, St. Vincent Ferrer and others.

Vessels of silver, that is to say, zealous priests such as have been found at all times in the Church in great numbers.

Vessels of wood, that hold less.

Vessels of earth, lukewarm priests, who are easily spoilt by the spirit of the world, such as have at no time been lacking unto the dishonour of God's kingdom.

Let our first desire be to become a vessel of gold, a shining monstrance which proclaims the Lord our God

[25] 2 Tim. 2:20.

to all men, and calls on everyone to adore Him. "I therefore, a prisoner in the Lord, beseech you that you walk worthy of the vocation in which you are called." [26] "Be ye followers of me, as I also am of Christ." [27] Then joyfully onward in spite of all our failings. "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Christ Jesus. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency may be in the power of God." [28] "And God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able: but will make also with temptation issue, that you may be able to bear it." [29] "I can do all things in him who strengtheneth me." [30] "For it is God who worketh in you, both to will and to accomplish, according to his good will. And do ye all things without murmurings and hesitations; that you may be blameless, and sincere children of God, without reproof, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation; among whom you shine as lights in the world. Holding forth the word of life to my glory in the day of Christ." [31]

[26] Eph. 4:1. [28] 2 Cor. 4:6, 7. [30] Philip. 4:13.
[27] I Cor. 4:16. [29] 1 Cor. 10:13. [31] *Ib.* 2:13-16.

CHAPTER II

"An Apostle"

"PAUL an apostle of Jesus Christ."—In these words the Saint usually introduced himself to the communities, and indeed he could hardly have chosen a better one, for it not only expresses most appositely his position in the world, but it also reveals most clearly the inner self of this remarkable man. The word "apostle" connotes striving, contriving, staking one's whole person to win the world to one's ideas. The heart of St. Paul was filled with this spirit to an extraordinary degree.

Paul was a man of will, a man of powerful will, and moreover a man who willed with great confidence: therein lay the secret of his success.

He had always willed great things. Not content with the customary piety of his native town, he had betaken himself to Jerusalem, the school of righteousness, and had climbed every rung of the ladder of Pharisaism to the highest point. "And I made progress in the Jews' religion above many of my equals . . . , being more abundantly zealous for the traditions of my fathers." [1]

Perceiving, as he thought, falsehood in Christianity, he considered that all measures which had been taken against it were much too weak. According to his view, the sect should be persecuted with fire and sword, until

[1] Gal. 1 : 14.

the last germ was killed. Gamaliel may have cautioned moderation; his disciple wanted to go to extremes: "Saul, as yet breathing out threatenings." [2] "But Saul made havoc of the church." [3] "Beyond measure, I persecuted the church of God." [4]

Saul went to extremes also when he had become Paul. If he had previously persecuted Christ's Church, he had now to raise it to be queen of the world. This is the reason why he travelled from country to country, why he spoke, and wrote, why he exhorted and threatened, why he underwent countless labours. It was the will to conquer which drove him on, and the conquered world became his prize. So is it always: only where there is a serious determination to succeed does success come. But the determination to succeed cannot stand without the *firm conviction of success.*

Everyone as yet who has done great things in the history of mankind, was borne up by *a great faith.* It was thus with St. Paul: *he believed.*

I

1. Paul believed in the *cause which he pleaded.* He knew that his cause was *God's cause,* and therefore a cause which should attain its end among men with infallible certainty. "Whereof [i. e., of the church] I am made a minister according to the dispensation of God . . . *that I may fulfil the word of God:* the mystery which hath been hidden from ages and generations, but is now manifested to his saints." [5]

The word of God—God's eternal decree, the transformation of the world in Christ, a decree which

[2] Acts 9:1. [3] *Ib.* 8:3. [4] Gal. 1:13. [5] Col. 1:25, 26.

embraced time and eternity, and all peoples—was to become a fact, a victorious fact, and he, Paul, the weak man, was drawn into this plan and was destined to be a co-worker in this eternal law. This must have filled him with great joy.

What was the object of this sublime decree? "To whom God would make known *the riches of the glory* of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ, . . . whom we preach, admonishing every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present *every man perfect in Christ Jesus.*" [6]

"To make known the riches of the glory of Christ." This was a prodigious yet very necessary task, for there was so much misery without Christ. Paul himself saw it. "For we have charged both Jews and Greeks, that they are all under sin. As it is written: There is not any man just. There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. All have turned out of the way; they are become unprofitable together: there is none that doth good, there is not so much as one." [7] "Wherefore as by one man sin entered into this world, and by sin death; and so death passed upon all men, in whom all have sinned." [8] In Christ alone is there salvation. "The justice of God, by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all them that believe in him." [9] To steer the world clear of such dangers, to see oneself supplied with such means of salvation must bring joy to the heart of the friend of humanity.

"Teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." To teach man, to perfect him, nay to bring him to the one right

[6] Col. 1: 27, 28. [7] Rom. 3: 9-12. [8] *Ib.* 5: 12. [9] *Ib.* 3: 22.

perfection in Christ Jesus must have made Paul happy. To make man once more a man, a perfect man, has always been the ardent but, alas, often futile endeavour of all true friends of humanity. Yet, who possesses better powers for this gigantic task than the Apostle of the Lord, for he is the most effective of all artists, for to him is given to make of man, not a perishable, but an imperishable image of God.

2. How triumphant is God's decree! Christ's cause is God's cause, God's cause which will undoubtedly prevail. "And himself 'gave' some as apostles, some as prophets, some as evangelists, some as shepherds and teachers, *for the perfecting of the saints . . . unto the building of the body of Christ,* till we all attain . . . to the full measure of the stature of Christ." [10]

"Unto the building up of the body of Christ"—that Christ's Church should rise up, progress, and prosper, is the final aim of all history.

Whether prophets or evangelists, pastors of souls or teachers, all are builders of the one great building. For "the building up of the body of Christ!" The building was a success. Paul trusted his work. If he were to inspect it again to-day, he would see the massive walls, the noble pillars, the arches rising up so boldly, the domes standing out so majestically in the air. Paul was right: triumphant powers were at work. *"Christ from whom the whole body, being compacted* and fitly joined together, *by what every joint supplieth . . . maketh increase of the body,* unto the edifying of itself in charity." [11]

"For the perfecting of the saints!" The saints in

[10] Eph. 4: 11 f., W. V. [11] *Ib.* vv. 15, 16.

heaven are God's final purpose in all His work here below; they are His purpose, just as the grains in the stalk are that of the farmer when plowing, sowing, mowing, and reaping. *"For the perfecting of the saints"*—"After this I saw a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and tribes, and peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne . . . clothed with white robes and palms in their hands." [12] Do you see the starry sky forming a vault over the evening of priestly work on earth? The priest has an eternal aim, one which he will certainly reach; and it is little wonder, then, that Paul shrank from no trouble, "teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man," not good in a certain measure only, but "perfect in Christ Jesus." [13]

II

1. The task was sublime and had been entrusted to him by God Himself. Paul believed *that his mission had been given him from above,* and that was the second source of his triumphantly firm will.

"Paul . . . *called* an apostle." [14] He was the apostle who had been called, expressly chosen out and fitted for this great work. He was the man on whom God counted, from whom God expected much. For God has been pleased to distribute His gifts to men by means of men, and to apportion his blessings in accordance with human effort. If Paul were obliterated from history, many would have always remained in night and darkness: and if every other good priest also was struck

[12] Apoc. 7:9. [13] Col. 1:28. [14] Rom. 1:1.

out from his surroundings, many would never know salvation.

"Paul, an apostle *not of men,* neither by man, but *by Jesus Christ, and God the Father.*" Here is a new ground for confidence! Paul was expressly called by God, and the Catholic priest also has this same security, for the Catholic priesthood, unlike other sects, is of direct divine origin. "An apostle . . . *by the will of God.*" [15] I stand in the place that God has assigned me, before a gap which can be filled by me—by the *will of God!* What God wills, He accomplishes. "An apostle of Jesus Christ, *according to the commandment of God our Saviour.*" [16] ("Apostolus Jesu Christi secundum *imperium Dei* Salvatoris nostri.")

Who is there who does not here think of the "Imperium Romanum," the Roman Empire? With what pride and confidence Rome's ambassadors entered her provinces, for the Roman Empire stood behind them. But what is the Roman Empire compared with "the Empire of God our Saviour and of Christ Jesus our hope"? And is a man who relies on such a hope to despair?

2. Certainly one's own unworthiness may frighten one.

Paul also knew how little suited his former life had been for a messenger of God, and how weak his human power; but one fact comforted him: it was not he himself who had to carry out everything, but rather God, who intended to work through him. And God, whenever He willed it, always brought great things to pass, even when He found the most unfavorable conditions.

[15] 1 Cor. 1:1. [16] 1 Tim. 1:1.

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In the days of yore, by one powerful word He called forth the light from the darkness, the world from nothingness. Man requires great means if he is to achieve anything at all great; but to produce something great from out of nothing, requires the power of God. Paul then had no cause for fear, for though he himself might be night and darkness, if God called him, he would become bright day.

"For God, who commanded the light to shine out of the darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God." [17]

Paul was not deceived. We can say of those around him: "The people that sat in darkness, hath seen great light: and to them that sat in the region of the shadow of death, light is sprung up." [18]

Everyone who is called to be a priest should take courage from his example—"an apostle according to the will of God." The light will shine in him, and he also in spite of his own feeble strength will become a light to the surrounding world.

III

Paul's spirit was sustained, moreover, by faith *in his confederates.*

1. First of all there was *the human soul.*

"For when the Gentiles, who have not the law, do by nature those things that are of the law; . . . *these are a law to themselves: who* show the work of the law *written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness to them, and their thoughts* between themselves accus-

[17] 2 Cor. 4: 6. [18] Matt. 4: 16.

ing, or also *defending one another.*" [19] The human soul is and will always be a soul that is naturally Christian, an "anima naturaliter christiana." It is set towards truth and virtue and remains so, just as the magnetic needle is pointed always towards the North pole. The Apostle saw it. In every kind of teaching, and in the many forms of idolatry, there was all the while a dissatisfaction, and a seeking further for the true God. In spite of all superstitious propitiation and palliation, there was still a fear on account of sin, and an anxious desire for atonement. "Destruction and misery in their ways: and the way of peace they have not known." [20] "Their conscience bearing witness to them." Moreover, one view is belied by the other, "their thoughts between themselves accusing."

We have the same picture to-day. Man never finds complete rest in error; and after he has sinned, his better self always cries out in sorrow, and he eventually grants the justice of God's law in spite of all his long-standing palliations.

2. In the big world too, Paul perceived many a tendency very favourable to the reception of His Gospel. There was the longing for the unknown God, the passionate cry for redemption, the refuge in mysteries of expiation, the impulse for human fraternization, the moral failure of the old culture, the helplessness of philosophy, and the awakening of slavery. Nor is it any different to-day. Certainly, many forces are fighting against us, but there are, on the other hand, many that come to meet us. To-day, also, there is a great seeking for God, a great longing for redemption. To-day,

[19] Rom. 2: 14, 15. [20] *Ib.* 3: 16, 17.

also, people are crying out for a new ordering of sexual, social, and civic life. "Their thoughts accusing them!" Even though the movement of thought turns away to the right and the left, it nevertheless moves in curves which always lead back to the axis of the Credo, and the two tablets of Moses; to the central line of the "anima naturaliter christiana."

3. The circumstances of the time were also favourable to Paul. The old world lay in great pains: not only in the death agony, but also in the pangs of birth. Antiquity died, but, in dying, gave birth to a more glorious new period. Is there nothing astir in the world to-day? God may have again designed the vicissitudes we see to-day, as fruitful harvest times for His kingdom. There is an awakening among all peoples and in our missionary activity. It is as if to-day God's call applied with renewed force to the Church: "Enlarge the place of thy tent, and stretch out the skins of thy tabernacles. Spare not: lengthen thy cords and strengthen thy stakes. For thou shalt pass on to the right hand and to the left: and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles and shall inhabit the desolate cities." [21]

4. The Apostle, however, relied more on his Associate above than on all other helps. "We have confidence concerning you *in the Lord,* that the things which we command, you both do and will do." [22] God commanded: "Preach the Gospel to every creature," and will effect what He has ordered. Is not our generation included in those words "every creature"? Has not God His intention in its regard, an intention that He

[21] Is. 54: 2, 3. [22] 2 Thess. 3: 4.

will *effectively carry out?* "Being confident of this very thing, that he who hath begun a good work in you, will perfect it unto the day of Christ Jesus." [23]

IV

No less than in his mission, his work, and his associates, Paul believed in the *armour* with which the Lord had provided him.

There are two things which mankind always needs; namely, *freedom from doubt, and freedom from the bondage of sin.* The Apostle of Christ can give both of these.

1. *Freedom from all doubt in his Gospel.* The Gospel was the purport of his whole life—"an apostle . . . *separated unto the gospel of God.*" [24] From it he promised himself the "abundance of blessing." [25] Therefore he devoted all his labour, care, and strength to it—"I do all things for the gospel's sake." [26] "Wherein I labour even unto bands." [27] He was grieved that "all do not obey the gospel" [28]; he rejoiced because "I have you . . . in the defence and confirmation of the gospel." [29] His comfort, even in his greatest sufferings, was "that the things which have happened to me, have fallen out rather to the furtherance of the gospel." [30]

He was quite right in having this confidence, for the Gospel was to him God's word, not the cleverness of man. "For I give you to understand, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according

[23] Philip. 1:6. [26] 1 Cor. 9:23. [29] Philip. 1:7.
[24] Rom. 1:1. [27] 2 Tim. 2:9. [30] *Ib.* v. 12.
[25] *Ib.* 15:29. [28] Rom. 10:16.

to man. For neither did I receive it of man, nor did I learn it; but by the *revelation of Jesus Christ.*" [31]

Let us also not forget that behind our Gospel stands God with His authority, His truth and power. "For Christ therefore are we ambassadors, *God as it were exhorting by us.*" [32]

What a powerful influence, too, is this "exhorting of God" to the people, which takes place every Sunday from hundreds of thousands of pulpits! "Os Dei tu es!" What a difference between this exhortation from the pulpit and those from the professorial chairs!

Because it was God's word, the Gospel was for the Apostle also God's *strength*—"for I am not ashamed of the gospel. For it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." [33]

It is a life-giving power. Without faith there is no supernatural life; without the Gospel there is no faith. "For the justice of God is revealed therein, from faith unto faith." [34]

It is the power of God, for it is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Christ still has something to say to the world; and the message of His birth, of His work, of His death still continues to carry away millions and millions of hearts.

The Gospel is an intellectual power, and is superior to all sophistry of the old philosophies. "Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?" [35]

What could the old world with all its philosophy have answered to the last questions? "For it is writ-

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[31] Gal. 1:11, 12. [32] 2 Cor. 5:20. [33] Rom. 1:16. [34] *Ib.* v. 17. [35] 1 Cor. 1:20.

ten: I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the prudence of the prudent I will reject." [36]

And the modern world of to-day has not surpassed the catechism in its answers to even a single one of these questions. "For professing themselves to be wise, *they became fools.*" [37] But, "seeing that in the wisdom of God the world, by wisdom, knew not God, *it pleased God, by the foolishness of our preaching, to save them that believe.*" [38]

Without the Gospel there is no faith; but what faith there is with it, for it is the "power of God"! "For the foolishness of God is wiser than men." [39] To-day still, the smallest catechism contains more wisdom than the thickest volumes of unbelieving philosophers! "We speak the wisdom of God . . . which none of the princes of this world knew." [40]

* * *

God's word is *effective.* "For the word of God is living and effectual, and more piercing than any two-edged sword; and reaching unto the division of the soul of the spirit, of the joints also and the marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." [41]

It is "living and effectual"—giving and helping life! Paul had experienced it in himself and his converts.

In the midst of the blind world they had sight; among the godless they were God-fearing; among the corrupt they alone were constant in goodness. All this was the work of the Gospel. Would not the priesthood itself be proof enough that the Gospel is God's power? Add to that the saints and the righteous from all ranks.

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[36] *Ib.* v. 19.
[37] Rom. 1:22.
[38] 1 Cor. 1:21.
[39] *Ib.* v. 25.
[40] *Ib.* 2:7, 8.
[41] Heb. 4:12.

"More piercing than any two-edged sword." It penetrates into the innermost parts, and cleaves asunder all doubt; it cuts up all those subterfuges and pretexts behind which man hides himself. *"Reaching unto the division of the soul and the spirit."* It pursues evil even to its last hiding place. *"A discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."*

Moreover, *"it pleased God"* not by wisdom, but by the *foolishness* of our preaching to save them that believe." Once and for all God has attached His grace and the conversion of the world to this means, and therefore we must be filled with unlimited confidence in these arms.

God's word is so *opportune* in these days, for it is the Gospel of *peace*,[42] and the gospel of *glory*.[43] Peace is so much needed in the world. "Saying: Peace, peace. And there was no peace." [44] How in place is the warning: "Learn *where* is wisdom, where is strength, where is understanding." [45]

Peace is not to be found in new armaments, nor in the power of arms. All this has failed miserably. Let us go back, then, to the Gospel of peace: "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, of them that bring glad tidings of good things!" [46] The priest, the herald of the Gospel, is, above all others, capable of preparing the way for the world's peace. He it is who is able to give what is really good to the sorrowing world of to-day, a world in which all things of earth are called in question. He alone with his Gospel of glory, which, like the gentle blush of dawn, lights up our sea of blood and tears, is able to maintain and increase courage and confidence.

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[42] Eph. 6:15. [43] 2 Cor. 4:4. [44] Jer. 6:14. [45] Bar. 3:14. [46] Rom. 10:15.

2. What suffering mankind anxiously awaits is relief of *its beggary of soul.* This too Paul and, along with him, the priesthood can offer. "Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ, and the dispensers of the mysteries of God." [47] The ancient world in its sin cried for mysteries: hence the recourse to the Eastern secret cults, the Eleusinian mysteries, those of Osiris, Isis and Cybele. What else did it seek there but purification—obvious, tangible purification. Paul knew that he could offer what they hoped for in vain—"But all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Christ; and hath given *to us the ministry of reconciliation.* . . . For Christ, we beseech you, be reconciled to God." [48]

"He hath given to us the ministry of *reconciliation.*" There is no more beautiful office than to reconcile enemies, to reconcile them for ever . . . the angry God and the sinning soul. This is truly a noble, a blessed office. How many tortured souls are comforted, how many eternally saved! Being purified by Baptism and Penance, the world breathes freely once more.

The ministry of *reconciliation* is very necessary for our estranged world; and how often and to what an extent it is exercised by priests in Baptism and Confession and Extreme Unction, so that many rainbows of peace shine daily over our altars.

* * *

Purification was the first thing aimed at in the mysteries. The second was to come nearer to God, to be united to God, to win new vital strength. Here again Paul had a remedy—"For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord

[47] 1 Cor. 4:1. [48] 2 Cor. 5:18, 20.

Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread, and giving thanks, broke, and said: Take ye and eat: this is my body, which shall be delivered for you." [49] To the seeking soul he gives *God Himself!* What have other religions to give in comparison with this?

We can understand that the Saint, seeing himself entrusted with such a great task, and armed with such arms and gifts, devoted himself to his life's work with strength and courage; that, full of holy pride in his power, he wrote: *"To me, . . .* is given this grace, to preach among the Gentiles, the *unsearchable riches of Christ, and to enlighten all men,* that they may see what is the dispensation of the mystery which hath been hidden from eternity in God." [50] We can understand why he did not fear and tremble in his work, but cried out boldly to the world: "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty to God *unto the pulling down of fortifications, . . . and bringing into captivity every understanding* unto the obedience of Christ." [51]

These thoughts should fill us with new strength and courage. New times dawn! Let us awake: new countries open out, let us gain them for Christ. The will to conquer gives confidence in victory and brings it about.

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[49] 1 Cor. 11:23, 24. [50] Eph. 3:8. [51] 2 Cor. 10:3f.

CHAPTER III

"A Man of God"

PAUL had to carry out God's work; but only one who is united to God can carry out God's work. When St. Paul, therefore, greeted his disciple Timothy with the title "man of God—" "But thou, O man of God, fly these things" [1] —he merely pointed out once more one of the most important characteristics of the apostolate and of the priesthood.

Paul felt that he was a "man of God" in the highest degree. He wished each of his fellow-workers to be such also; that is, to be a man especially *favoured* by God, one particularly *entrusted* with God's work, and, therefore, one who is *bound* to his God in a particular manner.

I

1. "But God, who is rich in mercy, by reason of his great love wherewith he hath loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions brought us to life with Christ. . . . For *by grace ye are saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves,* it is the gift of God; not as the outcome of works, lest any should boast. *For we are his handiwork,* created in Christ Jesus for good

[1] 1 Tim. 6:11.

works, which God hath prepared beforehand that therein we may walk." [2]

"For we are his handiwork." The Saint was full of this idea and wholly imbued with it. The former persecutor of the Church saw that he had been highly favoured and raised up: but all that had happened to him, his entire change of mind, his noble views, his high office, his great successes and his wonderful raptures—as he knew full well—all was merely the gracious gift of his Creator. He could never think too much of God's goodness towards him who had once been so blind; he was never tired of praising it. From the expressions: "God who is *rich* in mercy . . . by reason of his *great* love . . . when we were *dead* in our transgressions . . . *brought us to life with Christ,*" we see with what touching humility, with what childlike gratitude and high appreciation Paul thought of his election. He was right, for he had become a wonderful handiwork of God, even as a man, then as a convert, and finally as an apostle and saint. "Thou hast made him a little less than the angels: thou hast crowned him with glory and honour." [3]

2. But every Catholic priest also is a great work of God. Every priest who lives as a priest should, is a marvel of grace. He walks like Peter on the stormy waves, held up by God's almighty power. Consider the priest in his official authority, a priest who commands sins to vanish, hell to give way, and heaven, nay, the Son of God, to draw near. Creation is astonished at such a work of God. Consider, moreover, the priest's position in the *world,* his influence in

[2] Eph. 2:4, 5, 8-10, W. V. [3] Ps. 8:6.

spite of so little material power, the reverence shown him in spite of so few purely external qualifications. People look up to him full of confidence and respect, and from him they expect help in their needs when other powers are of no avail. What is it that gives him this position? He stands among the people as a "man of God," and therefore the reverence which they give to God, is in part paid to him, who is God's representative. As a man of God he upholds God's rights, gives out God's commands and gifts, calms God's anger and ensures God's protection. *As long, then, as mankind needs God,* it needs also his herald, the *man of God,* and continues to give to him a reflection of the honour which it knows it owes to its God. So the priest involuntarily participates in the greatness and the unshakeable and dominant place that God holds in the world. "Wherefore remember that aforetime ye, the Gentiles according to the flesh . . . were at that time Christless. . . . But now in Christ Jesus ye that were once far off *are brought near through the blood of Christ."* [4] *"Brought near through the blood"*— this applies in a much deeper sense to the priest than it does to the ordinary Christian.

It seems as if at every priest's ordination a new "Let there be light" comes forth. With every newly ordained priest an entirely new creation, a world full of light and blessing comes into the field, more beautiful even than the first paradise bright with the morning light and the morning dew. The oil of consecration on a sudden changes the youthful son of Adam into one who commands, and he steps back from the altar a king. It seems as if the pillars in the church

[4] Eph. 2:11 ff., W. V.

stand bolt upright in homage, as if all creatures bow to greet the new ruler. Indeed *"we are his handiwork,"* and that, "not as the outcome of works," but "God who is rich in mercy, . . . when we were dead in our transgressions. . . . Wherefore remember!"

II

Since he had been chosen so graciously by God, Paul had to show his gratitude. He now made God's cause entirely his own.

1. *He became a singer of God's praises.* "In the midst of the church will I praise thee." [5]

The praise of the one true God rang out from Paul's mouth amidst his pagan surroundings. What a glorious scene it was at Philippi. It was night: a prison, and in it were Paul and Silas. *"And at midnight, Paul and Silas praying, praised God."* [6] God's praise was being sung in the nightly hour in an idolatrous city and for the first time. Was it to be wondered at, that "suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken. And immediately all the doors were opened, and the bands of all were loosed." [7] Powerful convulsions were taking place here, convulsions in comparison to which the earthquake was only a weak echo. Were not thousands of other prisons here ready to burst open, and thousands of others in bondage ready to escape to freedom? In Paul's midnight prayer there was already a faint sound of the Resurrection trumpets.

But it goes beyond Philippi, and in all countries

[5] Heb. 2:12. [6] Acts 16:25. [7] *Ib.* v. 26.

resounds the chant defying the pagan gods: "Therefore will I confess thee, O Lord, among the Gentiles, and will sing to thy name." [8] What a happy night! On the one hand, we see the old pagan world with its temples, altars, its sacrificial repasts; and, on the other hand, in its midst Paul drawing forth deep melodious tones from the harp of God.

Every quiet presbytery, where in the dark of evening God's consecrated minister kneels in prayer—perhaps amid unbelieving surroundings—is like the prison at Philippi. The angels full of joy bend down over him also. Who, if anyone, is called to be the lute-player of God's praises, if not the chosen man of God, and especially in our time, when so much forgetfulness of God and so much blasphemy cries to Heaven for vengeance? Our daily Office should appear to us in a new light, for it fulfils a noble purpose; by it we make atonement for the godless world around us, and perhaps shake ramparts which paganism has built; by it we perhaps burst the heavy chains of sin, and so free innumerable souls who have long been held captive, just as happened at Philippi. "Praise becometh the upright," [9] and how much more the man of God. "Give praise to the Lord on the harp; sing to him with the psaltery, the instrument of ten strings." [10]

2. But it would be too superficial if the man of God thought he had to announce God's praise with words only. Paul looked deeper: the whole man must become the praise of God. "Man . . . is the image and glory of God." [11] All who see the servant of God,

[8] Rom. 15:9.
[9] Ps. 32:1.
[10] *Ib.* v. 2.
[11] 1 Cor. 11:7.

should thereby instinctively praise God on account of His servant's virtue and greatness.

Paul by his virtues extolled the glory of the Lord more than the heavens. "But for this cause I obtained mercy, in order that in me first Christ Jesus might show forth all his long-suffering, *as an example for those* who should hereafter believe on him unto life everlasting." [12] "And I was unknown by sight to the churches of Judæa. . . . They only heard that he who once persecuted them was now preaching the faith . . . and *they glorified God because of me.*" [13] Praise arose from the servant to his Lord. What an example to us! "For you are bought with a great price. Glorify and bear God in your body." [14]

Paul's love for God was not satisfied with personal praise: he must hasten forth by land and sea until everyone joined him in the worship of the one God: *he became the herald of God's glory.*

"I will declare thy name to my brethren." [15] This is the wonderful work Paul did at Ephesus, Antioch, and Corinth, before Jews and pagans, unlearned and the philosophers of Athens, even before the pagan governor of Rome. With great power his cry went forth. "Preaching to you to be converted from these vain things, to the living God," [16] and from thousands of voices rang the echo of his preaching in all lands!

But this herald *had something to announce* to the world. Other teachers tell their hearers of minerals, birds, and animals, and human events; but Paul spoke of something higher, of God. Their science is mineralogy, zoology: his was theology. Their province

[12] 1 Tim. 1:16, W. V. [14] 1 Cor. 6:20. [16] Acts 14:14.
[13] Gal. 1:22-24, W. V. [15] Heb. 2:12.

is profane history: his was sacred and eternal history, the march of God through the ages, to reveal the secret depths of Providence, to point out the ultimate cause and meaning of all events, to trace everything back to its eternal causes—a momentous and consoling task! The subject of others is the mere speck of earth: his was the infinite God!

It is *so necessary* to announce faith in God. "Without faith it is impossible to please God. For he that cometh to God, must believe that he is, and is a rewarder to them that seek him." [17] "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved. How then shall they call on him, in whom they have not believed? Or how shall they believe him, of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear, without a preacher?" [18] We can understand, then, why the Apostle lifts up his voice like a trumpet.

3. God wants not only to be known, but to be honoured also; He wishes not only to be understood by the mind, but to be *taken hold of by the entire man.* "The Lord is nigh unto all them *that call* upon him." [19] Paul became, then, *a promoter of God's worship.* He strove zealously to promote meetings for the worship of God, e.g., in Corinth, to preserve them in their purity, and thereby to crush out pagan practices. He endeavoured earnestly to ensure the proper place of honour in the new kingdom of God for the greatest mystery of all, the Sacrament of love.

4. The new Gospel had not, however, to exhaust itself in idle dreams; it had to be put into action. It had

[17] Heb. 11:6. [18] Rom. 10:13, 14. [19] Ps. 144:18.

to better the morals, purify the hearts, and strengthen the whole of human society. And so, as man of God, Paul made himself the determined champion of the *laws of God.*

Gloomy was the picture of the times that met his gaze: the modern dance round the golden calf with its mad excitement, ideas of morality and moral life all in confusion! "Being filled with all iniquity, malice, fornication, avarice, wickedness, full of envy, murder, contention, deceit, malignity, whisperers, detractors, hateful to God, contumelious, proud, haughty, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, foolish, dissolute, without affection, without fidelity, without mercy." [20]

Why so? "Inasmuch as they have resolved against possessing the knowledge of God, God hath delivered them over to a reprobate mind, that they should do what is disgraceful." [21]

What help was there? Whither was distraught and perplexed humanity to flee? Where was it to gain a footing in the seething whirlpool? There were many who *promised help*—Epicurus, Zeno, Crates—they failed: there was only one who *brought salvation*—the God of Golgotha. God's word alone created the universe, God's law alone holds it *in sure hand over the abysmal depths.* Like a second Moses, then, Paul came down to the world, with the two tables of the Law in his right hand, strenuously urged their observance, and energetically reproved their violation. To his fearless action it was due, for the most part, that the stream of pagan corruption gradually receded, and purity and domestic fidelity, brotherly love, and honour, temperance and fear of God, blossomed forth once more.

[20] Rom. 1: 29ff. [21] *Ib.* v. 28, W. V.

"The law of the Lord is unspotted, converting souls." [22] That is true to-day.

5. How earnestly Paul took to heart the task that had been entrusted to him as a man of God, and how strictly he thought himself bound to God and His work, is seen in those most beautiful words which he once spoke in that memorable interview with King Agrippa: "When I was going to Damascus . . . the Lord answered: I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. But rise up, and stand upon thy feet: for *to this end have I appeared to thee,* that I may make thee a *minister,* and a witness of those things which thou hast seen, and of those things wherein I will appear to thee, delivering thee from the people, and from the nations, unto which now I send thee: *to open their* eyes, that they may be converted from *darkness to light, and from the power of satan to God,* that they may *receive forgiveness of sins, and a lot among the saints,* by the faith that is in me." [23] These words contain, in fact, the key to the Apostle's astonishing activity in all directions; they contain also the programme, which every man of God must call his own. No more beautiful text than this could be chosen for an ordination sermon.

III

Great privileges beget greater duties.

1. He who has been chosen out by God to be His man in an especial way, must *turn to God in an especial manner.* "Separate me Saul and Barnabas, for the work whereunto I have taken them. Then they, fast-

[22] Ps. 18:8. [23] Acts 26:12-18.

ing and praying, and imposing their hands upon them, sent them away." [24]

Through the imposition of hands Paul became one "set apart," and, as one set apart from all earthly vanities, he passed through life. He wished also all those who had been committed to his care and, above all, his fellow-workers to be set apart: "And be not conformed to this world; but be reformed in the newness of your mind." [25] Living in the world, they must not be of the world; called to be priests, that is, spiritual men, they must live in the spirit. "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." [26] "To walk in the Spirit" means, first of all: "you shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh." [27] "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are fornication, uncleanness, immodesty, luxury . . . enmities, contentions, emulations, wraths, quarrels, dissensions, sects, envies, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like . . . they who do such things shall not obtain the kingdom of God." [28] "But thou, O man of God, fly these things." [29]

Sad it is, if a man of God succumbs to such passions! "Are ye so senseless? *Ye began with the spirit,* will *ye now end with the flesh?*" [30] And it is contradictory! outwardly one is a priest, and inwardly . . .? "But if . . . thou *restest in the law, and makest thy boast of God, and knowest his will, and approvest the more profitable things,* being instructed by the law, *art confident that thou thyself art a guide* of the blind . . . thou therefore that teachest another, *teachest not thyself:* thou that preachest that men should not steal,

[24] Acts 13:2, 3.
[25] Rom. 12:2.
[26] Gal. 5:25.
[27] *Ib.* v. 16.
[28] *Ib.* v. 19f.
[29] 1 Tim. 6:11.
[30] Gal. 3:3, W. V.

stealest: thou that sayest, men should not commit adultery, *committest adultery:* thou that abhorrest idols, *committest sacrilege."* [31]

It is, further, corrupting and *destructive.* "Thou that makest thy boast of the law, *by transgression of the law dishonourest God. For the name of God through you is blasphemed among the Gentiles, as it is written."* [32]

2. "To walk in the Spirit" means also to keep all *self-seeking* far from oneself: "I have not coveted any man's silver, gold, or apparel." [33] It means to sacrifice everything, in order to win the love of Our Lord. "I count all things . . . but as dung, that I may gain Christ." [34] *It means living exclusively for God.* "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercy of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, pleasing unto God . . . that you may prove what is the good, and the acceptable, and the perfect will of God." [35]

Paul's laborious life passed hour by hour in entire conformity with the holy will of God was a holy and pure sacrifice more beautiful than those of Sion.

3. "To walk in the Spirit" means to lose oneself entirely *in God.* "But thou, O man of God, fly these things: and *pursue . . . godliness."* [36] What gives the priest the title "a man of God" is not his zeal, but his familiarity, his intimate intercourse with God. "Heaven is where we belong." [37]

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[31] Rom. 2: 17ff. [33] Acts 20: 33. [35] Rom. 12: 1, 2.
[32] *Ib.* vv. 23, 24. [34] Philip. 3: 8. [36] 1 Tim. 6: 11.
[37] Philip. 3: 20.—Our translation "Our conversation is in heaven" is not correct; the rendering of the Greek is "Our *country* is in heaven."

It is from this, above all, that he draws his influence. What captivates the hearts of the faithful, is not so much the priest's knowledge or his social work, as the conviction that he is a "man of God," that is to say, a pious man, walking on intimate terms with God.

From this springs forth his solid success. It is interesting to note that the prophets of Israel, often uneducated men, exercised a far wider influence on the religious reformation of the people than the ordinary *Scribes and priests.* This was partly due to the fact that they were specially called; but it was also due, to a great extent, to the fact that they were particularly *intimate friends of God.* The Scribes and priests too often explained the Scriptures as a matter of routine and profession, and performed their sacred duties with exactness, it is true, but more because it was their business, than in obedience to an inner impulse; but the kingdom of God had become *something very dear to the prophets' hearts.* They had made it their own; they had lived it in themselves anew, and had won it for themselves once more. God's word *burned* in their soul; now they thrust it forth, . . . and it was no wonder, then, that it set other hearts on fire.

And even to-day, whether it be in the confessional, in the pulpit, in private instruction or by the bedside of the sick, the words of a priest who is close to God, have very different effects from those of one who carries out his duties in a merely professional way.

4. Learned men have enlightened the world with their lucid explanations, but it is only *prophets and apostles who have converted it.* How much more fruitful was the work of St. Francis of Assisi, Clement

Hofbauer, the Curé of Ars and others, than that of many who were superior to them in learning.

In everything let the servant of the Lord note those words: *"That you may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God."* [38] Let him prove himself everywhere worthy of his God. God is the Saint of saints, the King of kings—how necessary it is, then, that the man of God should bear about in himself some of God's worthiness.

But this worthiness, or dignity, should not be anything artificial or stiff, but something arising spontaneously from his interior religious life and his walking in God's presence.

"Man is the glory of God."—Let our whole bearing be manly. "Man of God" is the title St. Paul gives his fellow-workers; that is, a *"man"* of God and not an ultra-pious female.

How is it that priests often please menfolk so little? Does not the dress, the position of the hands, the play of the eyes, the tone of the voice, the nervous, anxious demeanour now and then bear too effeminate a stamp? Do we not perhaps give preference to devotions, subjects, and styles of preaching that are too sentimental? Are not our ways sometimes capricious, wayward and unstable? Are we not sometimes too timid? How different was St. Paul! He was a *man* of God, a thorough man. How firm and bold his demeanour, even before the learned and kings, how solid, clear, and telling his speech, how captivating his character!

Only a man elicits admiration from men; and genuine women, also, allow themselves to be caught by him

[38] 2 Thess. 1:5.

alone. All demand devotion; but false devotion is hateful to all healthy feeling people.

5. Chosen in an especial manner by God, continually working for Him, the priest, on his part, may expect much from God. He can place his whole hope in God. "But if any man love God, *the same is known by him.*" [39] What a sweet comfort it is that God knows my endeavours and cares, my sacrifices and sufferings. "To the angel of the church . . . write: *I know thy works,* and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them that are evil." [40]

"For he, that in this serveth Christ, *pleaseth God, and is approved of men.*" [41] What could please us more than the consciousness that we are pleasing God? That is the sweetest reward of all labour. To please God is the most beautiful fruit, the only fruit worth striving for, in all our toil here below.

Thence comes the further satisfaction: "Let us have peace with God." [42]

Peace with God, how few have it, and yet how necessary it is for all. The man of God carries it about with him as a safe treasure. He frequently feels it. When he leaves the confessional after hours spent in contact with the pain and misery of sin, hearing the story of continual struggling and falling, he may well thank God that he has so long been allowed to walk in peace with Him. "And let the peace of Christ rejoice in your hearts." [43] "And the peace of God, which surpasseth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus." [44]

So the priest knows no fear or trembling. "And

[39] 1 Cor. 8:3. [41] Rom. 14:18. [43] Col. 3:15.
[40] Apoc. 2:1, 2. [42] *Ib.* 5:1. [44] Philip. 4:7.

such confidence we have, through Christ, towards God." [45] On one thing alone has he placed his hope: "One thing I have asked of the Lord, this will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life." [46] He may expect it too: "I believe to see the good things of the Lord in the land of the living." [47] The man of God belongs to God, and so should have nothing to fear under His wings. *"For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; or whether we die, we die unto the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's."* [48]

It is no wonder that in consideration of all this, the knee bends down full of reverence, and the tongue, overflowing with intense happiness, speaks those words of thanks: "I give him thanks who hath strengthened me, even to Christ Jesus our Lord, for that he hath counted me faithful, putting me in the ministry; who before was a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and contumelious." [49]

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[45] 2 Cor. 3:4. [47] *Ib.* v. 13. [49] 1 Tim. 1:12, 13.
[46] Ps. 26:4. [48] Rom. 14:8.

CHAPTER IV

"Ordained for Men"

IN THE raised chancel, at the altar, stands the priest, with the chalice raised aloft. Above him is heaven, behind him is the multitude of the faithful praying. This is a symbol of all his work. "For every high priest taken from among men, is ordained for men in the things that appertain to God, that he may offer up gifts and sacrifices for sins." [1] He is placed between heaven and earth, and as mediator has to conciliate and unite the one with the other.

The priest is a *"man of God,"* and, as such, has to look after *God's rights among mankind;* but he is equally a *"high priest taken from among men,"* and therefore must fight *man's cause with God.* Such it is that the prince of the apostles considers the office of the priest.

He is *"ordained for men";* that means: he is ordained in order to *help* man, to *devote himself to* man and to *feel with mankind.*

I. THE PRIEST IS ORDAINED TO HELP MAN

Among the many helpers who come to the aid of mankind, the priest occupies quite a special position; for earthly needs are left to the care of others, while to him are committed those matters which surpass

[1] Heb. 5: 1.

everything else: he is ordained "for those things that *appertain to God.*"

"For those things that appertain to God." Much lies in this one phrase, for it includes man's relation to his eternal Source and eternal End, to the Giver, Sustainer, and Benefactor of his life; the relation on which depends eternal happiness and misery; the relation of this world of semblance to the true and everlasting world beyond. The priest should consider what has been entrusted to his care; he is weaving an eternal web on the loom of time.

Those things that appertain to God should ever be before the priest's eyes. Whether he busies himself with matters of learning, of civil life, or of art, he should ever bear in mind that his best must be devoted to those things *that appertain to God.* These things he should, and must place before all others. Everything else he does must serve this purpose. People rightly expect this from him as a priest; for it was in order to give this, that he was ordained. To forget this, would be to blot out his priestly character and to place himself on the same level as lay people. "No man, being a soldier to God, entangleth himself with secular businesses; that he may please him to whom he hath engaged himself." [2]

This task again embraces three things: the priest must *worship God in the name of God-fearing men; he must reconcile sinful man to God; and he must lead to God those that are struggling towards Him.*

1. *He must worship God in the name of God-fearing men. "That he may offer up gifts and sacrifices."* [3]

[2] 2 Tim. 2:4. [3] Heb. 5:1.

It is noteworthy that St. Paul gives *this* aspect of the priesthood the first place rather than preaching or organization or charitable work.

The Holy Sacrifice is indeed the central point of a priest's duty. We find this is so even in the *Old Testament*. Even the Scribes, who were laymen, explained the Scriptures; the Pharisees also devoted themselves to ascetical instruction and works of charity; but the priest was needed in order to offer up sacrifices and to celebrate the sacred mysteries.

It is the same, moreover, among all peoples: among the Egyptians and Babylonians, among the Romans, the Incas, and the negro tribes. Everywhere the chief thing that people expect from a priest is not so much an earthly power, as a *higher power,* an influence with *the powers above*. The multitude is afraid of entering into communication with these, and so expects that the priest will satisfy in their name for their duty to the Godhead; that he will appease God's wrath and draw down His blessing from above. While they remain below at the rails, full of awe, he, like Moses, must hasten up to God, and there perform their duty with Him. If the priest relieves them of this task, they hail him with joy, because they feel that they themselves are unsafe and unworthy in presence of the world above. But it is only if he undertakes this rôle of mediator, that the priest may reckon on influence and recognition.

If, then, in all religions, people look on the celebration of the mysteries as the distinguishing mark of the priesthood, how much more so is it the case in the *New Testament,* for which everything that went before was only a preparation. "For the law having a shadow

of the good things to come." [4] "But Christ, having appeared as High Priest of the good things to come, hath entered into the sanctuary once for all through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made by hands, that is, not belonging to this creation, nor again in virtue of the blood of goats and calves, but of his own blood, having thus secured everlasting redemption." [5]

Christ's sacrifice on the Cross, and its renewal on the altar is, and will always be, a fresh spring of grace, the source of all sanctification, the unceasing highest honour and propitiation of the Father. It is, and will always be, the central point and the source of all strength in the whole of our religion. If a priest could do no other work than the daily celebration of the Holy Sacrifice in quiet seclusion from the world, he would, truly, not have lived in vain. Nay, his quiet work would have benefited mankind much more than the noisy doing of many others. For one single sacrifice of Christ gives God the Father more honour than the clamorous doings of all men in the world the whole day long. Because it propitiates for sin and draws down graces, it contributes more to moral elevation and culture than all the self-sufficient art of those popular educators who, active the whole day long, rely on purely natural means. Christ says: "Without me you can do nothing." [6]

Let us, then, reserve for the celebration of the Sacred Mysteries *that* place in our priestly life, which befits it; namely, *the first place*. The morning hour at the altar is, in the life of the whole day, what the

[4] *Ib.* 10:1. [5] *Ib.* 9:11, 12, W. V. [6] John 15:5.

hour of Calvary was in the world's history—its culminating point.

At the same time, let us not forget at the Holy Sacrifice those words *"for men."* We should include all men in the Holy Sacrifice. The liturgy brings this home to us in a beautiful manner by the words it places in our mouth when we raise the host on the paten at the Offertory. The Holy Sacrifice is applied, first of all, to all those present: *"pro omnibus circumstantibus";* then the circle widens out beyond the particular church, until it embraces all countries and peoples: *"pro omnibus fidelibus" (for all the faithful);* but not satisfied with this, it stretches beyond this lower world, until it has drawn the entire Christian family into its range: "pro vivis *et defunctis*" (for the living *and the dead).* It is as if there were millions and millions standing invisibly near the sacrificing priest and laying their hands on the paten and praying with him: "Receive, O Holy Father, eternal God . . ."

How wonderfully the character of the priest as mediator here comes to light! How much honour to God flows from this sublime sacrificial rite, performed by the priest's hands, supported by the whole of Christendom, and sanctified through Christ's co-operation!

The priest should rejoice that he possesses in the daily Sacrifice such a means of praising God and of covering superabundantly the deficit of honour which arises daily through human indifference. Our first care, then, should be the worthy celebration of the Sacred Mysteries.

2. He must *reconcile sinful men to God.* "That he may offer up gifts and sacrifices *for sins."* [7]

[7] Heb. 5: 1.

The scales of men's sins sink terribly low every day! Yes, it is true; but let us not forget the counterpoise that we have. Does not *one* drop of Christ's Blood weigh more than all the sins of all men taken together? Why so much pessimism? It is from a one-sided view of the world. We see the sins and the desolation, but not the remedy. Do we, then, entirely forget the Apostle's words: "My little children, these things I write to you that you may not sin. But if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the just: and he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world." [8] And "where sin abounded, grace *did more abound.*" [9] Has not this superabundance of grace entirely disappeared from our horizon? *One* movement of Christ's will counterbalance all those that are hostile to God throughout the world, and as a result of the Holy Sacrifice there remains over each day a great surplus of honour to God. Does not the present world with Christ appear incomparably more brilliant in God's eyes, than paradise without the Crucified One? Surely, the Apostle is right in those words "grace did more abound." What joy, to know that we can daily make up for the loss which the world and God's honour have suffered!

* * *

If Holy Mass is always a renewed "Glory to God in the highest," it is none the less a perpetual "peace to men of good will."

How the care of sin oppresses us all! There is no worse pain than the pain of sin! How heavily the consciousness of sin weighs on many! With what dread they await eternal judgement! "Whither shall I go

[8] 1 John 2:1, 2. [9] Rom. 5:20.

from thy spirit? Or whither shall I flee from thy face?" [10] This is the woeful sigh that rises from the hearts of the expectant multitude. Then the sacrificing priest comes to the altar, raises the Host and Chalice aloft to heaven "for the remission of sins," and once more the Flood disappears, and again the rainbow of peace shines out in the clouds, and despairing mankind breathes freely again. We think much of our own guilt and that of all men, but let us not forget that Christ daily discharges the debt of this guilt. How often a zealous priest might lose heart at the sight of men's sins; but when his eye at the consecration reads the words: "For this is the chalice . . . which shall be shed for you and for many *unto the remission of sins,*" he must feel comforted in spite of everything. Instead of discouraging sinners and always confining ourselves to urge them to personal works of satisfaction, let us oftener point out to them this great propitiation and help which Christ has brought about and continues to bring about daily. The majority of the faithful suffer severely enough under their guilt; do not let us make their burden heavier, but let us take it from them by pointing to Christ's sacrifice. "Be comforted, be comforted, my people, saith your God. Speak ye to the heart of Jerusalem, and call to her: for her evil is come to an end, her iniquity is forgiven." [11]

3. *He must lead to God those who are struggling towards Him.* It is not true that the man of to-day refuses all guidance. Mankind has always had need of guidance, and even to-day this need is still felt. See

[10] Ps. 138:7. [11] Is. 40:1, 2.

how men to-day snatch at daily papers and pamphlets; how they hurry to meetings, and all in order to gain clearness in their doubts. How joyfully and often how blindly they allow themselves to be caught by some speakers and leaders. In what a child-like manner the most self-sufficient man follows his physician in his bodily ailments! The greater the uncertainty of self and the greater the need, so much the greater is the necessity of reliance on others.

But it is in *religious* matters that man feels his powerlessness most acutely; for he stands face to face with a world that is unknown to him, one that is mysterious to him, the world of God and eternity. How heavily the eternal duties fall on the soul of even the bravest man! Everyone feels here that it is a question of his all. Moreover, there are so many complications of the soul, so many passions and doubts. Even the cleverest and most self-confident man cannot manage for himself in these matters. We ourselves, who are familiar with all secrets of religion, apply in the personal affairs of our own soul to someone who understands; and we are happy if we have found someone who counsels us in our doubts, inspires us with courage and firmness in our struggles, and comforts us in our troubles.

We cannot expect this to be any different with other men. All long for a support: women, because they are so much the more in need of help; but also men. Young men seem to be obstinate, because too often they are treated sternly and harshly, not because they reject all help. Nay, it is just the young man who longs for advice and help: for much is working in him that he does not understand and cannot master. He suffers defeats, which press on him heavily; passions are

aroused, which he would only too gladly overcome, but cannot control alone. How grateful even the boldest fellow is, and how gentle he becomes, if anyone stretches out a hand to help him.

And even the mature man feels how powerless he is in face of his passions and sins. Moreover, riper age has disillusioned him; eternity, which is ever drawing nearer, makes him fearful; youthful sins lie like a heavy burden on his soul. How grateful he is also for a little comfort and advice! How often does not an otherwise hard man pour forth hot tears, especially when he is on a bed of sickness, or after he has been through severe trials of soul, if a priest has helped him to be reconciled to himself and his God!

Again, what a sublime office it is to lead men as the noble friend of men! They are men, God's noblest creatures on earth, God's children! They are men with immortal souls, men struggling, endangered, hungering and thirsting for happiness and life, often very neglected and misled by inner passions and outward seducers! "I have gone astray like a sheep that is lost." [12] And then they are such grateful and affectionate men! "They continue with me now three days." [13] They are men who, with a priest's guidance, are capable of such high things. "That they may receive a lot among the saints." [14] What, then, is to be done? "And Jesus going out saw a great multitude and *he had compassion on them,* because they were as sheep *not having a shepherd, and he began to teach them many things.*" [15]

To see the needy multitude, to have mercy on it, and *at once to begin* to give it of His best, that is the Redeemer's way.

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[12] Ps. 118:176. [13] Matt. 15:32. [14] Acts 26:18. [15] Mark 6:34.

But to do justice to this task, the priest must devote and adapt himself to men.

II. THE PRIEST MUST DEVOTE AND ADAPT HIMSELF TO MEN

1. It is not everyone who does justice to this demand. There is, for example, the *self-seeking* priest, who looks on his office merely as a means to his own comfort or enrichment. His first question on choosing a new position is not, "Can I do much good there?" but, "What does it bring me?" It is not forbidden to seek earthly things in a moderate way as a kind of accessory, so long as the primary end continues to be God's honour and the salvation of souls; but there are those who invert the order: their first aim is their own selves, and their activity is not infrequently merely a burdensome task thrown in.

Such a priest, then, exercises his office in this spirit. It is not *he* who serves his sheep, but *they* who have to serve him. He does not go after them, but demands that they pay him homage. The result is a domineering way and a lack of zeal. He does his duty in essentials, but there are wanting a deeper interest in the needs of the faithful, an understanding of their spiritual difficulties, and a great desire to help them. "For all seek the things that are their own; not the things that are Jesus Christ's." [16]

"Woe to the shepherds of Israel that fed themselves! Should not the flocks be fed by the shepherds? You ate the milk and clothed yourselves with the wool and you killed that which was fat: but my flock you did

[16] Philip. 2:21.

not feed. The weak you have not strengthened and that which was sick you have not healed . . . neither have you sought that which was lost: but you ruled over them with rigour and with a high hand. And my sheep were scattered . . . my sheep have wandered in every mountain. . . . Therefore, ye shepherds, hear the word of the Lord: As I live, saith the Lord God, . . . behold I myself come upon the shepherds. I will require my flock at their hand, and I will cause them to cease from feeding the flock any more." [17]

A *finer* form of egoism does not look to gain and comfort—it possibly sacrifices both in a great measure; but it considers its office merely as *a means of manifesting itself, of making its talent for organizing, its literary and preaching gifts shine forth, and of providing a channel for its love of work, its social and political activity.* It does not use its talents and capability so much to benefit souls, but seeks souls in order to exercise *its talent* and capability and love of work *on them.* The office of priest is used as an opportunity to display one's own personality to all the world. Hence, it does not ask: Has all your work really helped souls and God's honour? but it is satisfied if its undertaking has succeeded, if it has received applause. Hence its annoyance when applause is wanting, and others are more favoured with success.

And a priest who gives himself up to certain *favourite hobbies,* for example, writing, politics, art, learned studies, and in so doing avoids as much as possible other less congenial duties of his office, such as, care of the poor and the sick, the confessional, the instruction of children, readiness to help those who await him

[17] Ezech. 34: 2ff.

in the parlour—does not such a priest fail in respect of being ordained for men? Of duties missed through pleasure, we will not speak. What does St. Paul say: "As I also in all things please all men, not seeking *that which is profitable to myself, but to many, that they may be saved.*" [18]

* * *

That priest also fails to adapt himself to men, whose *ascetical tendencies are falsely directed.* There is the priest who is more inclined to an inner life and takes no real pleasure in dealings with men. The world with its faults and failings repels him. Being of a dove-like nature, he would like to take wings, escape from all dust and smoke, and fly to the pure distant heights of God. Solitude, meditation, and spiritual reading are his pleasure; recollection in God, his highest joy. Hence, he shrinks from contact with the sinful world and buries himself in silent contemplation. With St. Peter, he wants to build his three tabernacles on Thabor, in order to rest even now in the possession of God; but he also forgets that he is called to work for God here below. Does this attitude proceed from zeal for God? No, not entirely. It is because this mystical repose *is more to his taste,* that he seeks it. Once again, "for all seek the things that are their own; not the things that are Jesus Christ's." [19]

If, on the one hand, we cannot be too insistent that the priest should be in his whole being one "set apart," that he should love retirement and cultivate personal sanctification, it would be wrong, on the other hand, were he to confine himself too much to his cell and the sacristy, and so lose touch with the world. He is

[18] 1 Cor. 10:33. [19] Philip. 2:21.

a priest—an apostle—not a hermit or a monk. He is ordained for men—not like an anchorite, for the salvation of his own soul only. Piety is nothing else than the continual willingness to fulfil God's will in all things. Any piety that causes the priest to neglect one of his chief duties, is false piety. The ideal piety of a secular priest is not that of a hermit like St. Anthony, but that of the Redeemer and St. Paul, both of whom did not flee the world, but went into its surging and stormy life in order to save that which was lost. It is, alas, true that priests have suffered shipwreck in the whirl of the world; but it is quite as true that monks in their solitude have become apostates, and that even in the desert a St. Jerome and a St. Anthony were not freed from temptations of the worst kind. Earnest zeal for other souls is often the best protection for one's own soul, not only because the seeking heart thereby receives a firm and great objective in life, not only because the spirit is led away from many dangers, but because the care of other souls keeps awake thoughts of eternity, awakens holy energy, heightens abhorrence of sin, and incites to the practice of many virtues. One who is not fortified inwardly, and who is of a worldly inclination, will undoubtedly be swallowed up in the vortex of the world into which he throws himself; but one who leads an interior life, and goes into the stir and bustle of the multitude only with the most holy motive of saving it, may say to himself: "In the Lord I put my trust: how then do you say to my soul, Get thee away from hence to the mountain like a sparrow?" [20]

* * *

[20] Ps. 10: 1.

In close relation to the priest with false ascetical principles, we have the *pessimistic priest.* He began his work for souls with great zeal. He preached, he pleaded, he worked hard in the beginning, but the world remained as it was, bad, an inert mass into which it was impossible to breathe any life. Many things turned out failures. Now he turns away discouraged. Yet all in vain, for the world will not be cured by the physician's flight, nor will the troop stand firm if the officer decamps. And then, after all, is everything in vain? St. Paul saw himself face to face with quite another world, and, yet, he and his successors succeeded in improving it radically. Despondency is not a virtue; it is oftener the fruit of hidden pride. We promised ourselves so much from our own power. Yet, we could hardly exact that God should give more brilliant successes *to us* rather than to other highly deserving men who had grown grey in His service. This would have been presumption on our part. If, with St. Paul, we had considered ourselves "the least of the apostles" and, like him, one who did not feel worthy "to be called an apostle," one who considered himself to be "as one born out of due time," we should without doubt have been satisfied with the least result, and would have continued working on bravely. But we thought we were the greatest of the apostles, to whom half the world would fall as a prize, and when that did not happen, all our joy disappeared. Unhealthy self-confidence animated us, not pure zeal; or perhaps it was the dreams of youth unacquainted with the world, and not a mature sense of reality.

* * *

Similarly, the priest is at fault *whose activity is one-*

sided. Some interest themselves in the *upper classes,* but keep far away from the poor. This is a great mistake and corresponds little to Christ's spirit. To-day, if ever, we need apostles for "the man in the street"; to-day, when whole classes of the people threaten to fall away from the Church.

Others, on the contrary, work among the people with joy, but come to a stop on the threshold of those *in higher positions and of the learned.* Often shyness or fear is the reason, now and then it is the ignorance of the ways of society, not infrequently also too great an awe of the knowledge and position of these classes, or it is even comfort.

It is certainly often easier and more profitable to work among the poor who have faith, than among many of the so-called cultured people, with their critical and sceptical spirit, their unreasonableness and ingratitude, and their not infrequently poor Catholic spirit. But that does not give us a right to leave this part of Christ's Church to its fate: they also have immortal souls, and their influence is of the most far-reaching importance either for good or for bad. "The poor have the Gospel preached to them." Yes, but these other classes are, often enough, in religious matters just the poorest.

Again, others of an idealistic disposition, enthusiastic for the greatest purity of soul and perfection, feel repulsed by the great multitude of the blind, the lame, the deaf, the paralytic, and the lepers who approach them. They are filled with aversion at the sight of them; and the thought "Here all efforts are in vain" awakens their disgust. On the other hand, their joy is in the few undefiled souls who are serving God zealously. They

feel they are inwardly related to them; they themselves are elevated and inspired by them. Hence, they abandon the great multitude to their fate, or only half devote themselves to them; but to the few chosen children, they sacrifice all their care and love.

This is quite natural, but is it Christ's way? This, once more, is seeking what pleases oneself, and not what is profitable to many. True love and zeal turn just to those who are most deserving of pity, for these require quite special care.

* * *

How differently St. Paul acted from all these types of priests which have been mentioned. Without shyness, he stepped forth into the midst of the big world. To everyone, the people on the streets of Corinth, the philosophers of Athens, the officials of Rome, and the elders of the Jews, he preached freely and frankly the word of God, which had been entrusted to him.

In this his pattern was Christ, who "nowhere taketh hold of the angels, but of the *seed of Abraham.*" [21] Yes, Christ did not flee the world, but sought it out. It was not with the pure angelic world that the Word of God united Himself; He took hold of the seed of Abraham: and what kind of seed was that? It was this human race so full of faults, so full of pride, so full of wickedness, and, yet, He took it by the hand. Not only that; He assumed it at the same time, made it His own, entered into it entirely, lived and thought, felt and suffered with it, breathed likewise through its tissue, and poured His Blood through its veins. In that, then, the priest's taking hold of the seed of Abraham should consist.

[21] Heb. 2: 16.

2. This adaptation is to be effected, first of all, by external personal contact.

The pastor of souls must not confine his efforts to waiting in church for his parishioners to come to him; he *must go after them.* He is not playing the rôle of an eastern potentate, who summons his subjects to an audience, but of a good shepherd, who seeks out those committed to him, in garrets and cellars, in the drawing-room and kitchen. It is said: "The Church has no need to run after people." That is one point of view. Of course the Church has no need of it, but the people have. Are the people there for the sake of the life-boat, or the life-boat for the people's sake? God also has no need of man, but man certainly needs God. For that reason He became man.

How did St. Paul act? "You are witnesses . . . as you know in what manner, entreating and comforting you, (as a father doth his children,) we testified to every one of you, that you would walk worthy of God." [22]

Our Apostle proclaimed his Gospel not only at the obligatory weekly service in the synagogue, but set up his pulpit in the lecture room of the philosopher Tyrannus,[23] and in the house of Titus Justus. In Philippi he wandered out by the city gate, and, finding a group of worshippers by the river side, he began to instruct them. Often of an evening in Corinth when his day's work was done, he visited individual working families, in order to instruct them. As a weaver, he mixed right among the people. He dwelt like them in the dark quarter of the city, worked with them in the workshop, and ate from the same dish with them. More-

[22] 1 Thess. 2: 10-12. [23] Acts 19: 9.

over, every meeting with other men—whether it was in prison or on the ship, before the tribunal or in the audience chamber of governors and kings—was utilized by him for spreading the Gospel. He was a real city apostle and a "master of the Gentiles." No one came in touch with this personality, blazing with the love of God, without receiving at least something of its wealth. Did not Paul owe this success chiefly to this personal contact with men?

Did not Socrates do similarly? It was not by sensational meetings, or by means of thick volumes, that he propagated his ideas, but by looking out small groups in the market-place, in the workshops, in the playgrounds, in houses. Does not the success of certain modern sects and parties, e.g., the Salvation Army, the Social Democrats Party, rest on the same missionary method? Since men no longer came of their own inclination to the kingdom of God, the kingdom of God in Christ came down to them.—Grace does not want to be worshipped as a queen, but offers herself as the handmaid of men, and so goes after them. Let us understand its nature now better than formerly! Today, if ever, apply the words: "Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city. . . . Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled." [24] Much can be done by our societies, and especially by our sodalities; much also by house to house visiting and personal contact, by participation in family events and feasts.

* * *

But in all his contact with the faithful, let the priest not forget that he is among them as a *priest;* that he

[24] Luke 14: 21.

has, then, to occupy himself solely with those things that appertain to God, and that *this* is what people expect of him, and not anything merely secular. As a man of God, he should carry light into the life of the world, and, like Christ at Cana, change the water of earthly joys and troubles into the wine of supernatural and spiritually elevated life. It is in order to carry the divine into the bustle of the world, that he has received his vocation, and not in order to make the worldly still more worldly. Worldly-mannered priests, because of their skill in worldly matters, because of their enjoyment of life, etc., may be welcome to worldly-minded people, but they serve merely as a means of pacifying their own worldly spirit: the Christianity of such is not taken seriously by serious Christians. They may like such priests as good company, but, as a rule, they do not choose them as confessors or directors: people usually prefer to wander off to a lonely monk for this, even though they otherwise joke at his being out of date.

By this we do not mean to imply that a priest should act everywhere as an *importunate* censor, moraliser, and kill-joy, or that he should everywhere chase all joy away by his serious, gloomy countenance—nothing were more likely to give people a dislike of the priesthood than this—no, not by untimely nagging, but simply by his personality imbued with God, by his appearance and behaviour, he should give everything earthly a direction towards higher things. Wherever he appears, higher thoughts and feelings should be spontaneously awakened. Where he has stayed, a certain consecration should remain behind, like the evening glow after the setting of the sun. All who are present should involuntarily feel that they have been made better, puri-

fied, raised, and ennobled by him. "For virtue went out from him, and healed all." [25] It was very little that the angel of Bethlehem said, but hardly had he disappeared, than the shepherds said to one another: "Let us go over to Bethlehem, and let us see this word . . . which the Lord has showed to us." [26] Is it not desirable that every visit of a priest should have a like effect?

* * *

This contact with the public should not be merely an external one, but should extend to the whole *inner man.*

The priest has to penetrate into the life of each individual, and to adapt himself to it. *He is ordained for men*—and so in his *sermons,* instructions, church services, and arrangements, he must offer what suits the *needs of mankind,* and not *his own taste.* How many fail in this regard! They choose subjects and sermons, or introduce devotions and arrangements, which are according to their own inclination, but which seem neither useful to the people, nor desirable. Then we wonder, and are annoyed, if we find no response! How much better a good business man understands his work. He does not manufacture goods at random, nor according to his own taste, but according to the needs and desires of the great public, and so he makes his business.

He is ordained for men, and *not for angels,* and so a priest should not be over-exacting in his demands. He should not credit the faithful with a life which only angels without flesh and blood could and should lead. Man consists of *body* and soul; and the pastor

[25] Luke 6:19. [26] *Ib.* 2:15.

should not, therefore, always esteem the material as impure, low, or unworthy of man.

He is ordained for men *living in the world*—for men who in fact live in the world and with it; who, in the whirl of the world, have to ensure for themselves an earthly competence and their eternal salvation. Therefore, priests should not condemn and defame everything worldly; nor should they set up their own sacerdotal asceticism, or that of a monk, as the goal for everyone else: for the children of this world cannot, after all, realize this ideal, nor are they bound to it. Does the eagle expect the beasts of burden at the plough to soar upwards into the heights like itself? True pastoral wisdom consists in leading every creature to *its own kind of perfection,* and not in enforcing on it *perfection that is not meant for it.* The perfection of the man of God differs from that of the business man; that of the nun from that of the housewife.

He is ordained for *fallen man!* This is almost entirely forgotten. Too frequently we expect men to avoid every sin, and to live always in God's grace. This is certainly a beautiful ideal, and one that we should strive for energetically. But do not let us be disheartened if many do not reach it. It is with the *"seed of Abraham,"* or, better, with the *"seed of Adam"* that we have to deal. Adam fell, even in the innocent state of Paradise, and do we require fallen man to be continually free from sin?

From an epileptic we do not expect anything else but that he should now and then break down; and the human race to-day is like such an invalid. Never to sin is abnormal, in spite of grace; to commit many faults, is the normal thing among the present children

of Adam. We are engaged in a stormy sea voyage; we are involved in a gigantic fight, and it is no wonder that many become seasick, or are wounded by the enemies' shots. We often suppose the whole human race is healthy, and hence we are unhappy if disease of the soul makes its appearance. In reality, all children of Adam, being "under sin," were destined for death, and we should rejoice that we are able to heal them again and save so many. Did not Our Saviour think so when He pleaded that He wanted "to save what was *lost,*" and when He assigned the rôle of the sick person to us, and to Himself that of the physician?

The priest is ordained for *men of our age.* For this reason, a priest should bring forth from his salutary store of teaching and grace, not any kind of medicines, but such as serve men who are living now and are fighting with the needs of to-day. For this reason, also, he must study modern life in all its ethical, religious, social, and political bearings and adapt to it his preaching and pastoral care. For no one goes into battle to-day with cudgel and halberd; no one still works his cures to-day after the manner of Galen; and to-day, in the age of warehouses, no one carries on business from hucksters' stalls as was customary forty years ago.

III. THE PRIEST MUST FEEL AND SYMPATHIZE WITH MEN

External and internal contact alone will not suffice: the priest must *have the right tone, and be inspired by the true spirit,* by sympathy. "For we have not a high priest, who cannot have compassion on our infirm-

ities: but one tempted in all things like as we are, without sin" [27]

How is this sympathy to be expressed?

1. In the whole *attitude of the priest and in the idea he has of his office.* The priest should often tell himself that he is called to be a *helper,* and not merely a *stern commander.*

An active, but unenlightened zeal, not infrequently is at fault in this regard. The priest who is gifted with high ideals and is inspired with a burning desire to enforce God's law and God's rights everywhere, falls into the mistake of being too harsh and severe in the pulpit, in the confessional, and in private direction. How harshly his scoldings fall upon the sinful soul, how hard his judgements on the lapses of the multitude seem; how coldly he dismisses the habitual sinner and others; how loudly he thunders out his indignation against abuses in the parish!

But however well-meant this may be, it mistakes the character of the *priestly office;* for, as we have remarked before, the priest is placed not only as the champion of God's rights, but equally as the advocate, the protector, the helper and the physician of sinful humanity. Being himself "taken from among men," he is to make his own the interests, the sufferings, the battles and needs of Adam's children; he is to intercede for them and to obtain them grace. This is what Moses did when he went up the mountain before God and said: "This people hath sinned a heinous sin . . . . either forgive them this trespass, or if thou do not, strike me out of the book that thou hast written." [28]

[27] Heb. 4: 15. [28] Ex, 32: 31, 32.

This is what Christ did, but in a more sublime manner. How anxious He was, He, who was God Himself, for the exact fulfilment of God's commands! How each single sin pained Him! And yet, with all His zeal for the law, He remembered *the frailty of those who are under the law!* He found many excuses and cried out: "Come to me, all you that labour, and are burdened, and I will refresh you." [29] He did not despise evil-doers, but said: "I have compassion on the multitude." [30] He did not shout at them with a voice of thunder, but helped them: for He knew only too well that He was not dealing with wicked, so much as with sick people. It is certainly good to be *zealots for the law,* but let us be equally *compassionate for those who are under the law.* Christ was not a high-priest who cannot have compassion, but one who *can have compassion* on them that are ignorant, and that err, "because He himself also is compassed with infirmity." [31] He who has become man sees human misery only too clearly, and feels it only too deeply. It is not so much a question of lack of good will, as of lack of clear knowledge. They "are ignorant and err."

That is just the case to-day! Do not let us forget that we have to deal with a fallen race, a race on which the whole inherited sin and passion of many centuries still makes its mark felt; a race which is compelled to work in surroundings infected with sin; a race which, being daily overwhelmed with bad impressions, finds little opportunity of making for itself, as we do, a counterpoise against temptation by meditation, prayer, and study.

Let us not forget that the priest also "is compassed

[29] Matt. 11:28. [30] Mark 8:2. [31] Heb. 5:2.

with infirmity."[32] Should we be better than they are, if we were placed in the same circumstances? And would it not break our hearts, if, in such struggles and falls, we found always a stern inexorable judge? How bitterly we ourselves feel sharpness and severity from our superiors, and, on the contrary, how happy and grateful we are, if, in the midst of all our faults, we have found a kind gentle judge and *comforter.*

Yes, a *comforter!* It is just the sinful man who needs uplifting and comfort: for no sorrow presses down more heavily than the sorrow of sin. Censure, like a heavy shower, beats everything down; the flowers close up, and growth stops. But a gentle sunshine opens hearts wide and draws forth from them sweet tears of penance; it once more creates light and strength to do away with the mischief and to give new life. The person who feels only God's severity, trembles before Him; but the one who has felt all His kindness, even in spite of his sins, detests his crime much more sincerely and attaches himself with new love to his Lord. Do not let us think we are going to effect most by inspiring an oppressive sentiment of fear. Motives of gratitude, of confidence, and of love are much more effectual in the long run. And how could these feelings better be aroused than by the fact that, just when the sinner expects nothing but terrifying words on account of his great guilt, he sees the guilt instead washed away in kindness? We should teach people to *love God;* but they cannot really *love* that fearful God whom many preachers and confessors put before them. The forgiving father, as Christ depicts him in His parables, is much better suited for this purpose.

[32] Heb. 5:2.

It remains true, nevertheless, that with *unscrupulous sinners,* we must not leave aside reference to God's judgement; but it is still equally true that many are much sooner moved to sorrow by more gentle reasons, than by fear, and that with everyone it is only confidence and love that will make a conversion complete. Christ's forgiving meekness had a far more lasting effect than the Pharisees' gospel of fear.

This "compassion" should be the accompaniment running through all the priest's ministration. First of all, in the *pulpit and confessional.* There the priest should not appear to the people as the severe judge of all sinners, but rather as their helper, consoler, and counsellor. He should never ascend the pulpit to give vent to his anger, but rather to find an outlet for his compassion. He should never think: "To-day I must give the people a good scolding"; but let him always ask himself: "What can I give my congregation to-day? How can I cure them of their sins? How comfort them? How lessen their struggle?" The people must feel through it all: "That priest understands my difficulties; he means well by me; he will help me"—then they give themselves up to him gladly. And how grateful they are for every one of his words!

2. He should apply, then, this compassion *to the whole of life in all its forms.* How quickly and summarily we judge the efforts of certain classes of people, of some groups of women or lay circles in the better classes! An opinion is expressed often enough without our having thoroughly examined whether, after all, much in the movement is not justifiable, nay, has not grown out of crying necessity. It is for this reason that the clergy incur the enmity of many. They feel:

"That man does not understand how right our object is." We must not wonder, then, if so many contemporary movements slip from our guidance and even turn against us. The Pharisees were soon ready with the judgement: "What does this people know?" but Christ made Himself acquainted with their needs—"I have compassion on the multitude"—and they accompanied Him even into the wilderness.

Especially let us direct our compassion to all *odd people*. To-day there is a great deal of scrupulosity, neurasthenia, moral insanity, and hysteria, and some people can be very thoughtless in these cases. These poor souls are certainly troublesome, but that does not give a priest any right to repulse them. It is just these, often enough, who, like drowning people, are longing for a foothold. It is just *they* who need comfort. They find many critics and scoffers, but few who are ready to save them, few who will give themselves the trouble to listen to their woe, to speak words of comfort patiently to them. How we are put to shame by so many unbelieving nerve specialists who, often enough from purely humane reasons, take innumerable pains in order to infuse into some poor souls *courage to face life anew*. Prudence is certainly needed here, for drowning people often cling wildly to their rescuer and draw him down into the eddy: but the danger does not free us from lending a help.

In order to find the right tone of compassion in everything, the priest should place himself in the position of his flock. Here is where the mistake is frequently made. Hidden by protecting walls, he himself well provided for by nature and grace, the moralist can easily give forth severe laws and pitilessly reprove

their violation: but let him just go himself into the storm of life! It was said of Christ: "Wherefore it behoved him in all things to be made like unto his brethren, that he might become merciful." [33]

The priest should imitate Our Lord in that. He should study the difficulties of his people, place himself in their position, and notice what he would think and feel if he himself had been given their temperament and had grown up in their circumstances.

Not infrequently God gives a helping hand, by allowing moralisers who are too severe on others, to undergo serious temptations, or even to have a fall, in order that they may feel the great frailty of Adam's children. "For in that, wherein he himself hath suffered and been tempted, he is able to succour them also that are tempted." [34] Priests who have themselves had very severe interior trials, often become the most sought-out confessors, because they have learnt "compassion" and understand temptation.

In the parable of the Good Samaritan, Christ has shown us the ideal way in which this compassion should be shown in everything. The priest and Levite passed by the man who had fallen among robbers; but the Samaritan got down to him, made him tell him the whole story, looked to his wounds, and poured in oil and wine. Then he helped the sick man up, lifted him onto his mule, and led him to the inn for further treatment. That was a real priestly act!

Thus it was that our High-Priest Christ acted. Like the good Samaritan, He came down and lifted the seed of Abraham up from its misery, took it for His own, purified and cleansed it, and then led it with

[33] Heb. 2: 17. [34] *Ib.* 2: 18.

Him to the height of heaven, which is free from sin and pain.

Descending from heaven, He took hold of the seed of Abraham, and "Ascending on high, he lead captivity captive."[35] The imitation of this is what is meant in its full meaning by the words: "He is ordained for men."

[35] Eph. 4:8.

CHAPTER V

"A Wise Architect"

"YOU are God's building. According to the grace of God, that is given to me, as a wise architect, I have laid the foundation; and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation no man can lay, but that which is laid; which is Christ Jesus. Now if any man build upon this foundation, gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble: every man's work shall be manifest; for the day of the Lord shall declare it, because it shall be revealed in fire; and the fire shall try every man's work, of what sort it is. If any man's work abide, which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work burn, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire." [1]

Here again we have a new aspect of the priest's work. The pastor of souls is God's *architect*. He has to build up the edifice of God's kingdom, which embraces the world, time, and eternity. This priestly architecture must be directed, above all, by wisdom. "As a *wise* architect, I have laid the foundation." How, then, is St. Paul's architectural skill especially manifested? It is in the *right utilization of the ground, in*

[1] 1 Cor. 3:9-15.

the careful choice of suitable building material, and in the unshakeable observance of uniform style.

I. PAUL'S WISDOM IN THE RIGHT UTILIZATION OF THE GROUND

1. What kind of ground did Paul find, especially in *Corinth?* For it is of this city, in the first place, that our text speaks. He found a pagan city with all its miseries and defects.

The Corinth in which St. Paul set foot was no longer the old brilliant oriental city, such as is depicted by earlier authors. This had been destroyed more than one hundred and forty-six years before Christ, and had lain for a hundred years in dust and ashes. Only the old castles, some temples, and a few houses had survived as tokens of vanished greatness amid the ruins. In the year 46 the rebuilding began. Cæsar colonised the deserted place with veterans and descendants of free men. Around these there soon gathered those engaged in commerce, traders and merchants. The favourable situation of the harbour encouraged navigation and trade; and the city soon became once more the most populous, and the richest of the whole neighbourhood.

The inner aspect of the newly arisen colony corresponded to its development. Noble families were to be found there in as scanty numbers as the representatives of learning and art; the population was composed entirely of merchants, officials, soldiers, sailors, dock-workers, workmen, inn-keepers, and innumerable slaves.

The whole *life* consequently *took a coarse direction.* There was little appreciation of what was noble. The

one aim was rather gain and pleasure. The old gods had been pushed aside, it is true, but one significantly enough still maintained her position as before; namely, Aphrodite, the goddess of sensual pleasure. In the temple alone a thousand priestesses devoted themselves to her licentious service.

What wonder is it, then, that the moral level of the town sank more and more? Greed, fraud, and lawsuits were the order of the day; drunkenness was widespread, so that the Corinthian drunkard played a continually recurring and popular part in the comedies of those days, and even St. Paul himself had to reprove the newly converted Christians on account of their excesses at the agapes. Sensual licentiousness was so great that to live dissolutely was expressed by the words "to live like a Corinthian." This corruption had so taken hold of all circles that Paul had to confess to his new converts: "I wrote to you in my letter to have no intercourse with the impure, not meaning of course the impure of this world, nor yet the cheats and robbers, nor idolaters, for *otherwise you would have to leave the world altogether.*" [2]

No ground was seemingly less favourable for the erection of God's temple than this city of Corinth; and yet it was just in this city that Paul began his building, and brought it to a towering height such as he did in no other city.

What was it that gave him this courage? In the beginning, on entering this fortress of paganism, he too had been afraid; but God had come to his aid in a miraculous manner. "And the Lord said to Paul in the night, by a vision: Do not fear, but speak; and hold

[2] 1 Cor. 5:9, 10, W. V.; and Hausrath, *Jesus,* Vol. 1, p. 397.

not thy peace, because I am with thee: and no man shall set upon thee, to hurt thee; *for I have much people in this city.*"[3] Now there was no longer any hesitation; the thought of being face to face with a rich prize for God gave the Apostle gigantic strength.

This is a thought which should strengthen and comfort us priests also. To save and convert *all* was neither the lot of a St. Paul nor of Our Saviour; but everywhere, in every town, and in every sphere, God has His chosen ones. What a joy it is to rescue these from the surging waves of corruption; what a comfort to be able to erect an invisible kingdom of God just in surroundings that are so antagonistic to Him; what encouragement to be able to second God's aims by this work!

2. The ground there was not inviting, but, in spite of that, Paul was clever enough to make it serve his purpose.

First, he looked around for suitable starting points. Naturally the Jewish quarter occurred first. There he found a couple, *Aquila and Priscilla,* tent-makers, who were already Christians; he got work and lodging with them. In this little *family circle* into which, owing to the recruiting activity of the pious couple, many a stranger soon found admission, Paul began his instructions. From there the kingdom of God, like a leaven, spread in the town—a proof of the worth of individual good families, enthusiastic men and women, and small religious gatherings! It was by means of small, but zealous groups, that Christianity was first introduced into the world; and, to-day, will it not in turn be best

[3] Acts 18:9, 10.

preserved in the world by means of small groups? Let us always look on good men and women and God-fearing families as friends.

From Aquila's house, Paul went Saturday by Saturday to the place that would naturally come second for his work; namely, to the *Synagogue:* "Bringing in the name of the Lord Jesus, and he persuaded the Jews and the Greeks." [4]

Soon Silas and Timothy hastened to his aid from Macedonia; and now he began to preach Jesus Christ on a greater scale.

But the increased zeal on the one side, aroused jealousy on the other. "But they gainsaying and blaspheming, he shook his garments, and said to them: Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles." [5]

Hindered from speaking in the synagogue by noise and contradiction, Paul now set up his pulpit in the *house* of a proselyte, *Titus Justus.* The place was well chosen, from a certain point of view, for it lay near the synagogue and was of easy access to all souls who were seeking God. Success was not wanting: "Many of the Corinthians hearing, believed, and were baptised." [6] Even Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, with his whole house believed.

But St. Paul was not left in peace. All the envy and anger of the Jewish zealots was aroused because the Apostle with his followers left the synagogue and was continuing his teaching in a room next door to the synagogue. Instead of rejoicing that so many lost ones were finding the way to God, these Jews saw in the orator only an opponent, who drew away their

[4] *Ib.* v. 4. [5] *Ib.* v. 6. [6] *Ib.* v. 8.

audience;' and therefore, as usual, without delay they took all steps to keep him quiet. Accusations of all kinds were spread about; complaints were lodged with the authorities: nay, they did not draw back even from using force. Fortunately Paul found a wise judge in the Proconsul Gallio, who saw through the agitation and made it possible for the preacher to continue his discourses. Thus, the Apostle remained active for many months in the room of Titus Justus; and from there he introduced God's kingdom more and more into the pagan city.

3. It is remarkable that here also Christianity took its beginnings from the Ghetto, this dark quarter of the town, with its angular winding streets and twisted houses, the restless quarters of the poor, the sailors' taverns and lodging houses of dockers and hawkers.

Practically all the new converts belonged to the poorer and middle classes. First of all, Stephen and his whole house were baptised; two slaves, Fortunatus and Achaicus, joined him. Then followed the inn-keeper Gaius, "My host, and the host of the whole church"; [7] Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, and Erastus, a citizen and treasurer of the town; Quartus and Tertius, the last-named being the writer of the epistle to the Romans. [8] Besides these, there were many women, among whom we may conclude, from the references in the epistles to the Corinthians, were many who were unmarried and separated.

A few, certainly, of the better class people could be counted also among this new Christian community, but it was composed predominantly of the lower classes

[7] Rom. 16:23, W. V. [8] *Ib.*

of the people. "For, contemplate your own call, brethren; not many of you are wise according to the flesh, not many are powerful, not many of good birth. Nay, the foolish things of the world God hath chosen, so as to put to shame the men of 'wisdom'; and the weak things of the world God hath chosen, so as to put to shame the strong things; and the base things of the world, aye, the things that are despised, the things that are not, God hath chosen, so as to bring to naught the things that are, lest any flesh should vaunt itself in the face of God." [9]

It had been exactly the same in Galilee, except that there, the first ones to be found with Our Saviour in the quiet of country life were fishermen, peasants, shepherds, and boatmen; while now it was the city people out of the noise and bustle of the world. Again Christ's words came true: "I confess to thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones." [10]

A reminder for us! Christianity is, and will always be, above all, the *religion of the people and the masses.* Therefore, do not let us lose touch with the people, do not let us make ourselves one-sided protagonists of a social order which is estranged from the people.

The times when the Church was in most living contact with the people were always her happiest times. The times when she had most lost touch were her saddest times. How the Church flourished in the Middle Ages, when she was quite grown one with the class of commoners: what loss she suffered in those days when, as for example before the French Revolution, she kept

[9] 1 Cor. 1: 26-29, W. V. [10] Matt. 11: 25.

more to the higher classes and neglected the masses too much.

II. PAUL'S WISDOM IN THE CHOICE OF SUITABLE BUILDING MATERIAL

1. After preparations have been made for a suitable building, good *foundations* must be laid. These are a right faith, and good living. From the beginning, therefore, the Apostle made genuine faith both as to its object and form, his chief aim. Hewn stones are chosen for foundation walls—Paul chose them also. He did not entertain his hearers, like the Jewish Scribes, with casuistry, which kills the spirit; nor, like the Stoic Peripatetics, with dry moralising reflections; nor, like the Greek aesthetes, with witty, aesthetic treatises; nor, like oriental religious philosophers, with dreamy myths: but he began with solid *dogma*. The momentous truths of the creation, the fall, the Redemption through Christ, the new birth by Baptism, the last judgement, the resurrection and the eternal beatific vision—these are the truths he brought forth. These truths, so definite, and taking in the whole of existence, must have given a hold for the whole of life, at that time so shaken by doubt. In comparison to it, what were all the sophistry of the world's philosophy, all the phantoms and legends of mythology? On such foundations life could be built up into a truly storm-proof structure. Is it otherwise to-day? Has not life become meaningless for many, because they lack these hewn stones of the correct fundamental truths? Of what avail are all moral injunctions and exhortations if a person does not see clearly why they are to be observed? Before a person can begin building up his life, he must

at least know according to what plan the building is to be erected and what purpose it is to serve.

2. But even that is not sufficient: many know their duties well enough, and yet do not fulfil them, because they lack the necessary *stimulus*. Popular educators of to-day believe they can move mankind to virtue by pointing out its beauty, by appealing to noble humanity, to greatness of soul, and similar forces. In vain! All these points of view are valuable as helps, but they are not convincing: for in difficult circumstances they do not stand firm. Those words "Remember thy last end, and thou shalt never sin" [11] are of value even to-day. Often, indeed, it is a question of sacrificing all earthly things for the sake of virtue: how is that possible, if there is no prospect of some supernatural recompense?

One who is fully and completely taken up with God, His sovereignty, His goodness, His love and severity, His Incarnation and His work, will, of his own accord, endeavour to live a life that is pleasing to God; such an one practises virtue also from the only proper motives, his striving after virtue is not isolated, but is bound up on all sides with the whole building of the right view of life. How necessary, then, to-day in the age of Naturalism, of Evolutionism, and Monism is the insistence on the one supramundane God, the Trinity, the supernatural order, and the Fall, Christ's death of atonement, and the doctrine of Grace.

But the foundation stones must be *clean cut*. Amid the present vagueness, the intercourse with men of other beliefs, and the contact with all kinds of sects and

[11] Ecclus. 7: 40.

religions, we must once more set special value on *clear ideas.* How many Catholics dally with other religions: "These people worship God also; they too believe in Christ, etc." The idea "Whether Jew, Christian or Hottentot, they all believe in one God" threatens, partly on account of a certain religious fraternisation on the battlefield, to become once more a dangerous catchword.

3. A wise architect not only cuts the stones until they have clean-cut surfaces, but *fits them together and one on the other in an orderly way.* What a contrast to this is the lack of plan in sermons! Every pastor of souls before the beginning of a new year, should sit down and consider *which* truths are necessary for his flock during *this* year, and which errors and evils are to be combated.

It would not be at all out of place if *all preachers of the same parish and the same town* drew up a common plan of instruction for use in the pulpit. Do not many political parties act in this manner, and at their annual meetings settle exactly the matter of their speeches for their meetings in winter and go ahead in strict accordance with it? All priests of a town should be building at *one* uniform building for God; but if each one builds according to his own opinion, can anything great arise? How should it be? "And himself 'gave' some as apostles, some as prophets, some as evangelists, some as shepherds and teachers, . . . unto the building up of the body of Christ. . . . Thus we shall be no longer children, nor tossed on the waves and carried around by every wind of doctrine. . . . Rather *we shall . . . grow up in him who is the head, Christ. From him the whole body is welded and com-*

pacted together by means of every joint of the system, part working in harmony with part." [12]

4. Nowhere does all that has been said in regard to the wise laying of the foundation stones find better application than in *instructions in school and in catechising.*

Many undervalue this work. They can, however, rest assured that it is of almost greater importance and consequence than all the other preaching. Just as the stability of a building depends on its foundations, so equally the durability and certainty of one's faith in later life depends very often on the first instruction. In childhood the mind is fresh, the heart, as yet, places no obstacles in the way of the truths of faith; compulsory education makes it possible to give the matter thorough treatment; and the teaching regulations facilitate a graduated and progressive introduction to religion. Later on, a systematic exposition of the doctrines of faith is out of the question; for if one gives a continuous course of sermons, one's hearers do not derive the proper benefit from it, because they are too irregular in their attendance at sermons. What they hear is only fragmentary, and, of this, often little enough remains, because a deep impression is not made, but, on the contrary, the distracting influences after the sermon quickly wipe away again the good impressions which have been received.

Sermons are very good for reviving and deepening what has already been learnt, but they can hardly lay foundations: this is the work reserved for first instructions. The most effective pulpit, and that which has

[12] Eph. 4:11f., W. V.

the most decisive effects on life, is not the preacher's pulpit, but the chair of religious instruction in the school.

5. The right object of faith should be accompanied by the right form. The faithful are to *believe;* that is, they must accept the truths which are made known to them, not *on their own judgement, but on God's word.*

For this reason Paul never wearied of continually emphasizing the necessity and the possibility of faith. His doctrines—as he often repeated—were not humar inventions, but God's words. "For I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel preached by me is no gospel of man, nor did I receive or learn it from man, *but by revelation from Jesus Christ.*" [13] He came to them, not as one teaching his own doctrines, but as the Apostle of Christ. He did not indulge in "loftiness of speech," but "in showing of power." He appealed to Christ's *Resurrection* as proof of the divinity of Christ's teaching; and, relying on that, he demanded unconditional acceptance of his message. "For the weapons of our warfare . . . are powerful before God for the overthrow of strongholds; yea, we overthrow reasonings and *every lofty thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, we bring every mind into captivity to the obedience of Christ, we are in readiness to punish all disobedience.*" [14]

All this is deserving of attention to-day. Many people think they believe, and yet do not believe. They accept, it is true, the doctrine that is preached to them, not however on account of the *authority of the person who reveals, but merely because of the intrinsic evi-*

[13] Gal. 1:11, 12, W. V. [14] 2 Cor. 10:4-6, W. V.

dence of the matter that is revealed. "Yes, I believe that, for I can see it now." So people speak; but that means robbing faith of its kernel.

As a result of the great scientific culture of our days, of the egoism which rules everything, and of the protestant spirit which pervades the whole of our civilized life, as a result, too, of the continually asserted right of self-determination, and of the much emphasized duty of every educated man to give an account to himself for everything—as a result of all this, we have come bit by bit, even in Catholic circles, to outlaw authority completely. People believe, but *only their own views;* or they will perhaps follow an authority, but on the implicit condition that its teachings *coincide with their own personal views,* and that it *prescribes only what they themselves judge to be good.* It is not authority, then, that rules absolutely over the mind of its subjects, but *the latter* wants to determine the *former.*

They that belong to the part of the Church that *learns,* should submit to the part of the Church that *teaches.* But instead of this, they *set themselves up* as teachers and would put the Pope and the bishops in the class of those who should learn.

It is therefore certainly more than ever to the point that the priest, like a wise architect, should re-establish the faithful in the right *spirit,* that he should bring forward prominently the nature, the necessity, and the reasonableness of faith; in other words, that he should insist on *fundamental theology,* especially the doctrine of the Church's authority and pastoral power.

Before all knowledge of individual truths, the difference between the Catholic and the "modern scien-

tific" and Protestant principle of knowledge should be treated much more than is actually done. How few Catholics, for example, are aware of what the "consensus patrum," or "theologorum," in other words, what the "loci theologici" mean for the life of truth and faith!

Before all explanation of the *object* of faith, let us first give the faithful a right working *organ of faith.* Many difficulties will thereby disappear of themselves. For whoever wants to attain to knowledge by his own sophistry, will soon find himself running every moment along wrong paths. "Ever learning, and never attaining to the knowledge of the truth. Now as Jannes and Mambres resisted Moses, so these also resist the truth, men corrupted in mind, reprobate concerning the faith. But they shall proceed no farther; for their folly shall be manifest to all men, as theirs also was." [15] But if a person once accustoms himself to follow authority in the proper way, he lives always at peace, and finds his way through all abysses.

6. When the Apostle had laid the proper foundations of faith, he next directed his chief endeavours to building up a *real Christian life* on them. Above all, he sought to teach his new converts the *right idea of piety.* His converts, for the most part, were pagans, or at least, had grown up among pagan surroundings, and, being still under the impression of the pagan mysteries and pageantry, were accustomed to lay chief stress on non-essentials, on noisy fanaticism, on ecstasies, on the gift of tongues, prophecies, and other extraordinary things. But Paul cried out to them: "Nay,

[15] 2 Tim. 3:7-9.

covet ye the gifts that are greater. More than this, I show you a way that surpasseth all. If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or clanging cymbal." [16]

It is not the graces "gratis datae," nor is it, still less, artificially excited conditions of mind, which constitute piety, but the *real exercise of solid virtue.* And this consists not in a *purely natural uprightness,* which is often praised by philosophers, nor in a stoical equanimity, nor even in a humanity that is directed solely to this world, but in *supernatural righteousness,* the first object of which is God. "So there abide faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity." [17]

To-day also it would not be a useless task for us to instruct the faithful about the right kind of piety, for so many of them imagine that by "being pious" we mean merely saying many prayers, and going to a great number of services: for them the decisive mark of sanctity is nothing but as abnormal a life as possible, striking austerities, visions, ecstasies, and the like. The *main thing, the quiet exercise of solid virtue,* is almost entirely overlooked.

Yet, piety is nothing else than *"the will to give oneself readily to things concerning the service of God."* [18] Certainly a zealous life of prayer belongs to it, but only as a part of it, and as the source of nourishment and strength. Whoever is ready to fulfil God's will in all things in the spirit of faith, is genuinely pious, whether he can visit church much or not, whether

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[16] 1 Cor. 12:31; 13:1, W. V. [17] *Ib.* 13:13, W. V.
[18] St. Thomas. *Summa.* 2. 2^{ae}. Q. 82, art. 1. English transl. by the Dominican Fathers.

he labours in a secular calling, or sojourns behind monastery walls.

7. Christian perfection and holiness, then, is nothing else than the *highest degree of readiness* for everything that is according to the will of God. Let us make this clear to the faithful! With all regard for extraordinary things, let us teach them, nevertheless, to see the kernel of piety in the all-round virtue which is practised in daily life. This will both comfort them and give them courage. For so many good Christians, simply because they have so little possibility of praying and taking part in devotions, think they can do so little for their souls. Let us often, then, tell them that the best road to Christian perfection is the road of daily fulfilment of duties, if they are only done in the right spirit.

It would be good, now and then, to point out that Christian perfection, monasticism, and religious life are by no means one and the same thing, but, that the latter is rather only a *means,* indeed only *one* means to perfection, which can be reached by other paths. Paul exhorted all to sanctity: "This is the will of God, your sanctification," [19] but he did not urge everyone to flee the world entirely, but wrote: "Let each abide in the condition wherein the call found him," [20] and ordered only one thing, a continual progress in the virtues of one's position.[21] Let us guide people in the world in a similar manner, teaching them not to seek their religious progress so much in self-chosen accessories, but to seek it rather in their position in life, in the faithful fulfilment of its duties; and let us teach

[19] 1 Thess. 4:3. [20] 1 Cor. 7:20 W. V. [21] 1 Tim. 5; Tit. 2.

them to direct their whole life of prayer towards this object. Thus we shall avoid the not infrequent case of many men as well as women, who are very active in prayer, but very inefficient and forgetful of their duty in their profession; or of those who devote themselves to the calls of their position, but only very listlessly.

8. If the latter were more emphasized, another mistake would be avoided; namely, a false *egoism in religion.* The piety of many people is only *worship of self.* God is there merely to help *them,* to comfort them, and to make *them* happy. When all goes well, they almost forget God; but when trouble comes, when unrealizable wishes torment the soul, then they make assault on His goodness. But, alas, if He does not hear their prayers! Defiance, bitterness, indifference, nay, even total rejection of everything religious will be the result. How frequently we saw this during the late War! Whence does it arise? Have we ourselves not trained up the faithful too one-sidedly? Have we not placed *worldly prosperity* as a reward of a good life too much before their eyes? Have we not continually repeated that justice must come, without mentioning that it comes often only in the next life? Perhaps we have represented the doctrine of God's providence in such a way that our listeners had to conclude that it is incumbent on Providence to protect the "good" from all harm. If not, whence is it that at great tragical events, the question at once arises: "What has become of the providence of God?"

Perhaps we made a mistake in applying indiscriminately to our times the many passages of the Old Testament which promised earthly prosperity as a reward

of a good life: but we forgot that God spoke quite differently in the *New* Testament. In those days, when people were at a lower religious level, God had to help their stiff-necked spirits by an obvious earthly sanction. But in the purified New Dispensation He comes to us with a piety of a less selfish kind. "He who does not deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me, cannot be My disciple."

We must wean the faithful much more than we have done in the past from the Old-Testament idea that being good always brings happiness, that suffering is a sign of God's displeasure, that God's providence will guard the just man in all earthly events; and we must make them familiar with the New-Testament idea of the suffering just man, which found its highest exemplification on Golgotha.

That God does not exist for man, but man for God; that the first prayer should not be "Lord, give me," but "Lord, Thy will be done"—this is what we must impress on people, above everything else. In other words, the truth which St. Ignatius, in his thorough manner, places at the beginning of his Exercises and calls the "Foundation," and on which everything else is to be built up, the "Principle" from which all the piety that follows is to be deduced, the truth "Man was created for this end: to praise, reverence, and serve the Lord his God" [22]—this truth, to its full depth, must once more become common property. Like the discovery of Copernicus, this truth means the overthrowing of the entire heaven of ideas, and arranging it again in proper order.

If this truth is clearly grasped, it gives another stamp

[22] Foundation Exercise, Engl. transl. "Manresa."

to the entire life of prayer. It does not move, as is the case with so many, in merely selfish intercessory prayer and pious beggary, if we may use the expression, but rises aloft to much sublimer acts of unselfish praise and glory of God.

How few prayers of praise and thanksgiving there are nowadays! If man has only learnt to consider himself entirely as God's servant and possession, the continual dissatisfaction with God's arrangements disappears, and one avoids falling away from God because He does not hear one's self-seeking prayers.

9. This is important in another connection. The virtuous endeavours of many moderns are exclusively concerned with "man." Noble human nature, Humanity, Philanthropy—these are their virtues. People say of many a one: "He is a noble man, so good, so honourable, so ready to help one; it's true, he has no religion." All these people know only the second table of Commandments of Moses. Humanity is their god, and God has become for them a mere nothing.

If these *moderns consciously* eliminate everything that has to do with God, many *Catholics unconsciously* push it too much into the background. They lay great emphasis on social and charitable activity, or emphasize much the social virtues of truthfulness, honesty, fidelity, magnanimity, but set less value on the *divine* things, on frequent renewal of faith, hope, and charity towards God. They direct almost their whole aim to little man, and thereby forget almost entirely the infinite Creator. In face of all these aberrations it is necessary that piety should change, that it should no longer be anthropocentric, but theocentric. The first virtues Paul

inculcated were those relating to God: "So there abide faith, hope, charity." [23]

10. To put God once more right in the centre of all virtuous endeavour, was Paul's first undertaking.

This explains his continual endeavour to call mind and heart more and more *away from everything earthly, and to direct them to the eternal possession of God.* How happily he understood how to paint the future vision of God! How attractively he spoke of the future resurrection; how insistently he emphasized that life on earth is only to be compared to a race in the arena, since all earthly suffering, being a momentary evil, is not to be compared at all with the glory which surpasses everything. "For we know that he who raised up the Lord Jesus will raise up us also with Jesus, and will place us along with you. For all things are for your sakes, so that the grace that hath abounded through the many may cause thanksgiving to abound, unto the glory of God. Wherefore we do not lose heart; but even though our *outer* man is *decaying,* yet is our *inner* man *being renewed day by day.* For our *present light affliction ever more and more abundantly* worketh out for us an eternal weight of glory, while we look not at the things that are seen, but at the things that are not seen; for the things that *are seen* are but *temporal,* whereas the things that *are not seen* are *eternal.* For we know that if the *tent* that is an *earthly home be destroyed,* we have *from God a building,* a home not made by hands, *eternal in the heavens.*" [24]

With what earnestness also he enjoined: "All of us

[23] 1 Cor. 13: 13, W. V. [24] 2 Cor. 4: 14—5: 1, W.V.

must needs be made manifest before the tribunal of Christ, so that each one may receive what he hath won through the body, according to his works, be it good or ill." [25] What a heavenward direction such moving outpourings must have given to the whole of life! Thoughts of eternity!—How necessary they are again for our time! How little taste there is for that which is above! What little spirit of sacrifice and suffering in comparison to former times! What little sense of responsibility amidst all the confusion! How befitting it is that we should paint once more in glaring colours the day of future reckoning on the horizon of time.

With all his insistence on the eternal, the Apostle nevertheless was throughout just to *this world*. He certainly knew that the majority of his hearers were called to work out their salvation in the world. With determination he demanded flight from the *dangers* of the world in so far as it was possible. "I wrote to you in my letter to have no intercourse with the impure, not meaning of course the impure of this world, nor yet the cheats and robbers, nor idolaters, for otherwise you would have to leave the world altogether. What I did write to you was, not to hold intercourse with anyone styled 'brother,' if he be impure or a cheat or an idolater or a railer or a drunkard or a robber; no, not even to take food with such a man. For what have I to do with judging those without? Is it not those within whom you are to judge? But those without, God judgeth. Banish the wicked man from your midst." [26]

He further required *freedom of the heart from* un-

[25] *Ib.* 5:10, W. V. [26] 1 Cor. 5:9-13, W. V.

healthy *attachment* to the world. "In what condition each was called, brethren, therein let him remain with God. Now concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord, but I speak my mind, as one by the mercy of the Lord rendered trustworthy. I think therefore that this state is good on account of the present distress—that it is good for a man so to be. Art thou bound to a wife? Seek not to be loosed. Art thou not so bound? Seek not a wife. But if thou marry, thou hast not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned. Yet such as marry shall have affliction in the flesh; but I spare you. But this I say, brethren, the time is short: henceforth let those that have wives be as having them not, and those that weep as weeping not, and those that rejoice as rejoicing not, and those that buy as possessing not, and those that use the world as not using it to the full. For the world as we see it is passing away." [27]

11. The Christian's relation to *sexual life* was of profound importance for the whole of moral life at that time, and is still so to-day. It is not surprising that the Apostle, in the city of Aphrodite, began to settle this at once. In face of the loose pagan views, he pleaded powerfully for moral purity before marriage, and for holiness in marriage. Nay, he went further. Knowing well that the sunken world could be lifted up out of its slime only by great examples, he zealously planted in the morass of the pagan world, the flower of celibacy, freely chosen for God's sake. All these are, again, hints for us, who once more stand face to face with a similar devastation. It is not weak

[27] 1 Cor. 7:24-31, W. V.

adaptation, but systematic attack on the tendencies of our time, fearless inculcation of real Christian principles, and active encouragement of *voluntary self-denial,* that, to-day also, are the only effective dams to stay the stream of modern licentiousness.

12. The Saint further set great value on forming in his new converts from the very beginning a very high idea of their *rebirth in Christ* and of its necessity and dignity.

Not external fidelity to law, not personal practices of penance, not self-chosen virtues lead to righteousness and perfection, but only *a new life through Christ in His grace.* "For neither circumcision is aught, nor uncircumcision, but a *new creature.*" [28]

Thence arises the necessity for the means of grace, especially for the Holy Eucharist, in order to preserve the new creature. With what emphasis Paul promoted the Eucharistic life, especially in Corinth. It is to his first epistle to this community that we owe one of the oldest documents of this mystery of our religion. He knew indeed that only the wine which brings forth virgins was capable of checking pagan immorality. Has not Pope Pius X taught us to take a like way?

With this thorough dogma and solid piety the foundation had been laid: now it was a question of completing the entire building according to a uniform plan, of pointing out the place for walls, pillars and arches, and of preserving proportion and equipping the whole building in a worthy manner; in other words, of seeing about the right *style.*

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[28] Gal. 6: 15, W. V.

III. THE OBSERVANCE OF UNIFORM STYLE

From the very beginning, alongside the individual religious life, the *life of the community* had to be built up and regulated according to Christian principles.

1. In the first place, *externally*. This was no small task! for the first believers in Corinth were very varied. The Jew was to be found beside the pagan, the Greek beside the barbarian, the docker next to the town-councillor, the slave alongside the freeman, the servant beside her mistress. In addition to the national and social differences, there were also religious ones. Some inclined to fanaticism, others were deliberate, calm natures; some were enthusiastic about this preacher, others about that one. All this was a danger to community feeling.

The Apostle's first task, then, was to arouse the social feeling. Nowhere has the idea of the community of all Christians been so beautifully worked out as in the Apostle's utterances on this subject. By Baptism all the different members have grown into one body in Christ. But in this body each one has his special place, and his corresponding work. Everyone can not be the eye, or the ear, nor can everyone be hand or foot, but all are members of the same body, and serve the whole body. Therefore, no member may assume superiority over the other, nor complain of its position. One Faith, one God, one Baptism, one hope binds all to one holy brotherhood.[29]

Hence, the Apostle warns us against all *social revolt and revolution*. "Let each abide in the condition wherein the call found him. Wast thou a slave when called?

[29] Eph. 4:5; 1 Cor. 12:16f.

Let it not trouble thee; though, if thou canst become free, rather choose that. For the slave that hath been called in the Lord is a freedman of the Lord, and likewise the free man that hath been called is a slave of Christ." [30] It was not an orderly rise to better conditions of life that the Saint wished to prevent—for he was in his principles an open advocate of the human and Christian rights of all—but he saw himself compelled to stand up against an unreasonable desire of change. The new Gospel of freedom and equality was only too suited to cause the restless members of the lower classes to come forward suddenly with their rights in an exaggerated way, and to endanger the peace of society. In opposition to this, the Apostle pointed out that it is more Christian, for the sake of more noble advantages, to renounce all strict rights here below, and to remain in a servile position, and even to resist the attraction of freedom. Paganism might praise the right of personality, of independence, of influence, and of property as the highest good, but Christianity learnt from its Founder to cherish other values even higher. For He had humbled Himself unto taking the form of a slave; He had made Himself the subject of poor men, the servant of all, and had borne the most crying injustice like a lamb, which is forcibly lead to the slaughter and does not open its mouth.

What an important chapter this is for our time of social distress and class warfare, of exaggerated class arrogance, and of everyone's lust of power. A certain social *class distinction* is certainly good, but let us take care that the *real Christian spirit* does not disappear

[30] 1 Cor. 7:20-22, W. V.

from us at the same time. People no longer want to bear with life, but to better it; no longer to be ruled, but themselves to rule; no more to deny themselves, but to enjoy; no longer to suffer injustice, but to fight violently for all their rights. Up to a certain point all this is right; but how can we succeed here below in creating an ideal condition which will satisfy everyone? We shall always have much to bear, and much to renounce. Has the spirit of endurance and submission disappeared altogether? How different from Christ's doctrine, from His "Blessed are the poor," "Blessed are the mournful," and His cry to His followers: "He who does not deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me, cannot be my disciple." Let us take care that with all our social work, the world does not lose the best, the *Christian soul,* which is predominantly inclined to patience and sacrifice for the sake of the kingdom of God. How will the world ever attain contentment if it does not inwardly conform to Christ's example?

2. In order to promote *in an actual way* the feeling that they all belonged to one another, the Saint frequently gathered together the members of his community of an evening for a love-feast. There the Christians learnt to know one another: to those living lonely in the midst of the city, support and comfort was given, and the love of all the faithful one towards another was aroused. The Apostle also wished this solidarity to be preserved in *public* life as well. The Christians were to decide their lawsuits among themselves, and not before unbelievers. "Is there then not one wise man among you, competent to decide between his brethren? But brother goeth to law with brother,

and that before unbelievers? Why, the very fact of your having suits with one another is already a positive loss to you. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be robbed?[31]

The danger was that with pagan advocates, the pagan spirit also which rested on such principles as "an eye for an eye," "a tooth for a tooth" would again come in, instead of the Christian one which was imbued with mercy and pardon.

What a help it would be to our Catholic life if we were to succeed in getting our Catholic people again to have more recourse to their co-religionists in their scientific, literary, and economic necessities. In this respect is there not a considerable lack of esprit de corps? So then, as we have the chance, let us do good to all, but especially to those that are of the *household of the faith.*"[32]

Do not let us look down on pleasant parochial gatherings, which are well suited to encourage the feeling of solidarity among the faithful, and union between clergy and people, especially in the Diaspora and cities!

3. Paul had laid the foundation of God's kingdom in his new Christian community; the individuals were animated with the right spirit, and each one's proper place had been appointed to him. With impressive beauty, walls and pillars of the temple rose aloft. But then God's voice called the wise architect away. Others took his place. Their work was earnest, but neither quite correct, nor solid enough. Some of them brought forward rash doctrines; others offered rhetoric instead of solid instruction; others let themselves be

[31] *Ib.* 6:5-7, W. V. [32] Gal. 6:10, W. V.

carried away and preached too strict an asceticism; while others, again, by their partiality for individual preachers disturbed the spirit of union. The Saint had then to write to them the warning: "Let each look to it how he buildeth. Foundation can no man lay other than that which is already laid, which is Jesus Christ. But if a man buildeth upon the foundation, whether it be gold, silver, precious stones, wood, grass or straw—the work of each man shall become manifest. For the Day shall declare it, because that day is to be disclosed in fire, and the worth of each man's work shall that fire assay. If any man's work abide, which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive reward: if any man's work be burnt up, he shall lose his reward, but himself shall be saved, yet as one that hath passed through fire." [33]

This warning is of importance to-day!

Individual souls ask for our guidance. The Holy Spirit, helped by educators and former confessors, has already begun the building of the holy temple in them. Then let each one look to it "how he buildeth" thereupon. Do we build on them in the correct style; that is, do we guide them as the Spirit has up till now been leading them, as is suitable to their natural tendency and to the grace that has been given to them, or do we force a new style on them, that is to say, our own views? Do we add costly marble to the building that has already been begun, that is, do we keep them to solid practices; or do we offer them only mud mixed with chaff and straw as material, that is, showy piety and external practices which have not much spiritual worth?

[33] 1 Cor. 3: 10-15, W. V.

And in *the whole parish?* Do we continue to build in the good spirit of our predecessors? Do we promote and cultivate the good that has been begun, the confraternities and devotions, or do we let them fall off? Are we too much inclined to think that we must break away from all that is old, and put in its place new, and perhaps as yet little tested, things; or are we too much inspired with an aversion against all innovations, and so leave the building stand unfinished?

And what about preaching? What about catechising? Do these contain husks, or precious stones?

What a different sight the same parish often presents under two succeeding priests! Let each one look to it how he buildeth!

And what about the co-operation of *all priests* of the same parish? Does unanimity reign among them? Do the parish priest and his curates all build according to *the same plan?* Or could it be said of them: "For it hath been made clear to me concerning you, my brethren, . . . that there are quarrels among you. This is what I mean—each of you saith, 'I am for Paul,' or 'I am for Apollos,' or 'I am for Cephas,' or 'I am for Christ.'" [34] Is each one seeking perhaps to carry his own plans through, or does each one seek from pure vanity and lust of power to secure his followers for himself?

That will lead to the ruin of the whole building. For how can a work of art rise up when one person builds at one end in the Romanesque style, and another at the other end in Gothic? "Is Christ divided?" [35]

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[34] *Ib.* 1:11, 12, W. V.

[35] *Ib.* v. 13, W. V.

4. *For the priest's own religious life* the Apostle's words have a grave significance. The priest too is God's building. The foundation has been laid by the Holy Ghost and by good educators. Now let him look to it how he buildeth! Does he still follow faithfully the rule of life determined upon in the seminary, or in good retreats? Is each of the duties he performs, each one of his works, every hour of his life a precious stone, that is, a perfect building stone in every respect, or is there too much chaff mixed with it? Laziness, ambition, giving in to the senses, comfort. . . .?

5. "The worth of each man's work shall that *fire* assay." The fire of *temptation.* Did the virtue of the individual souls he had trained up stand firm in the danger of life? Did the whole parish prove true in the searching fire of the intrigues of unbelievers, in the burning purification of the Great War? Did not the faith and fidelity of many disappear in the flame like chaff? Why was this? "Fire shall assay": the fire of the *Last Judgement.* Will all individual actions and hours of your life stand the test then? "If any man's work abide, which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive reward: if any man's work be burnt up, he shall lose his reward, but himself shall be saved, yet as one that hath passed through fire." [36]

It is important for him, then, to fulfil his office like a wise architect. His is an ennobling and honourable work! For you are God's building; yes, indeed, a temple of God is before us in every soul of the parish and the whole of Christianity. It is God's temple, and includes the whole world, and embraces time and eter-

[36] 1 Cor. 3: 14, 15, W. V.

nity. Christ and His apostles, the Fathers of the Church, and missionaries have all taken part in the building; and now in all places the Pope, bishops, and hundreds of thousands of priests of the Lord are still adding to the building. The building continues to grow, the pillars rise up towards heaven, the arches bend over as if to embrace the world—oh, what a joy to be called a fellow-worker on *that* building! Others' work will fall in dust; but ours will stand for eternity, because it is built on a foundation of rock, which is Christ.

CHAPTER VI

"A Preacher"

ST. PAUL characterised the sword of the spirit *"which is the word of God"* [1] as one of the chief weapons in the fight with the powers of darkness. Thence arose his esteem for preaching, his pride in being able to say: "the gospel wherein I am appointed a *preacher.*" [2] His admonition to Timothy applies to us all: "Strive earnestly to present thyself to God as a man approved, a labourer unshamed, handling aright the word of truth." [3]

Paul's example and admonition teach us to announce God's word with indefatigable zeal, and with great prudence and discretion.

I

"Preach the word: be instant in season, out of season: reprove, entreat, rebuke in all patience and doctrine." [4] Thus St. Paul entreated his helpers; thus he did himself. By word and pen, in the synagogue, in the hall, in the small artisan's house, and by the riverside, on the ship and in prison, wherever willing hearers could be found, he put up his pulpit and announced God's word. What he wrote to the Thessalonians he could cry out to everyone: "Working day and night,

[1] Eph. 6:17.
[2] 2 Tim. 1:11f.
[3] *Ib.* 2:15, W. V.
[4] *Ib.* 4:2.

so as not to burden any of you, we preached to you the gospel of God." [5]

"Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season" applies more than ever to us.

1. In the first place zealous preaching is the holy *duty of our office*. Each one of us may apply to himself the words: "the gospel *wherein I am appointed.*"

God has called you also to be a herald of His revelation. He has for that purpose provided you with His graces; and, surely, you would not now wish to keep your mouth closed, and withhold God's word from mankind, thus robbing them of so many graces, inspirations, and heavenly fruits to which they have a right. That would surely call down God's anger on account of the hidden talent.

Formerly you were free; but since you have undertaken this office, you are no longer free as to fulfilling the responsibilities you have undertaken. Listen to St. Paul's words: "For whereas I am in all respects free, I have *enslaved myself* to all men, that I may gain the more of them" [6]; and those others: "For in so far as I merely preach the gospel, I have therein no matter for boasting, for necessity is laid upon me; woe to me if I preach it not." [7]

"Necessity is laid upon me": "'Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.' *How then are they to call upon him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him whom they have not heard?* And how are they to hear without *a preacher?*" [8]

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[5] 1 Thess. 2:9, W. V.
[6] 1 Cor. 9:19, W. V.
[7] *Ib.* v. 16, W. V.
[8] Rom. 10:13, 14, W. V.

2. Preaching is therefore an *indispensable* means in the building up of God's kingdom, and also a very *effective* one.

Do not imagine that preaching no longer produces any fruit. Just think how sometimes when you have formed for yourself a definite opinion in regard to a certain matter, e.g., some political question, you meet a friend or read a reliable newspaper. Both throw light on the matter from an entirely different point of view. They can adduce convincing reasons for their point of view, and the result is that you go away with an entirely different opinion from the one with which you came. *One* conversation, *one* newspaper article produces such a change in you, and do you think the words from the pulpit will produce no result? Is not everyone influenced by words? How much more, then, is it so when it is a question of God's word, God's word which He determined for the regeneration of the world, of which it is said: "It is by means of *the preaching* of 'folly' that *God hath thought well* to save them that believe." [9]

And if even *one* conversation, or *one* newspaper article has such an effect, what an influence must go out from the innumerable sermons which are preached every week in our churches! To what, then, do we owe it that, in spite of all hostilities, Christianity still plays such a great rôle in the world? Do not let us lose courage; the pulpit is still a great power; and whoever fills his post with some skill, stands up there as a victorious general.

3. "Necessity is laid upon me" for the *times* need

[9] 1 Cor. 1:21, W. V.

the sermon more than ever. "For there will come a time when men will not endure the sound doctrine, but following their own lusts will heap up to themselves teachers, to tickle their ears, and while refusing to listen to the truth, they will turn aside unto fables." [10]

"There will come a time"—it has already come—*"when men will not endure sound doctrine."* Men will no longer endure the sound doctrine of a supramundane God, of the divinity of Christ, of original sin, the necessity of grace and redemption, of judgement and eternal condemnation, of the restraint that is placed on them by their faith and by the Church, of chastity, and of the unity and indissolubility of marriage, of self-denial, and the carrying of the Cross. *"But following their own lusts will heap up to themselves teachers"*—teachers who adapt themselves to the wishes of men, who defend unbridled freedom and giving way to the senses, self-assertion and living life to the full: *"to tickle their ears, and while refusing to listen to the truth, they will turn aside unto fables"*—teachers who defend the fables of evolution, of pantheism, of making a god of nature, of the nobility of human nature, of free Christianity—these are the teachers people seek after. These are what people "heap up to themselves."

For this reason it is more necessary than ever to heed the words: "But be thou vigilant, labour in all things, do the work of an evangelist, fulfil thy ministry." [11]

4. "Necessity is laid upon me"; for however great the religious aberration of many may be, the *longing of others* for the bread of life is equally great. Our time

[10] 2 Tim. 4:3, 4, W. V. [11] *Ib.* v. 5.

is not entirely irreligious; on all sides the longing for the light given by religion, for help, and strength is forcing its way again. We must do our best to gratify it. Others are working hard. The Socialists, for example, would give much to gather round their platform every Sunday the great numbers that crowd our churches. We should realise the strength of our position and show real courage in the pulpit, a courage which trusts in its cause and is not afraid in spite of error, doubt, murmuring, attacks and abuse to bring forward the true principles of Christianity in all their strictness.

II

Besides urging his disciples to be instant in season and out of season, the Apostle inculcated yet another point: *"Handling aright the word of truth."* [12]

Handling *aright* means being careful to find the right opportunity for speaking, the right matter, the right form and the right spirit.

1. *The right opportunity for speaking!*

The first means for the diffusion of God's word is still the *sermon proper.* This must be encouraged above everything else, but not so much in quantity as in *quality.* In times gone by a sermon was a kind of rarity, and therefore an event; but to-day, in some places at least, there is too much preaching and speaking, rather than too little. Not only is a regular series of sermons given every Sunday at the Masses and evening service; not only have every sodality and confraternity their special instructions in the afternoon,

[12] 2 Tim. 2:15, W. V.

but also in the week there are often several other sermons owing to special celebrations, feasts, and octaves; and to-day every society requires its distinct course of lectures in its hall.

This frequency, good in itself, contains nevertheless a danger; namely, that of becoming commonplace.

When so much speaking has to be done and there is often so little time for a thorough preparation, not only the matter, but the form and style suffer. The preacher repeats himself, becomes careless, the audience hears the same truths in the same form too often, and preaching makes little impression.

It would be better perhaps if the number of sermons were *diminished* rather than further increased. Why, for instance, should we burden people during the week with sermons of *any kind at all?* If there is question of particularly impressive occasions, a popular feast, or an important and timely sermon—that is another matter; but how many old-time traditional sermons, which formerly were very popular, are now out of date, and moreover are very inconveniently arranged, so that in our present conditions none but a few pious old women can attend them. We should breathe new life into these by a complete transformation; or, if that is not longer possible, we should treat them like all dead things—bury them.

We should not, then, continue adding new occasions for sermons to those that already exist, but we should *make better use of those that exist. Our first care should be the careful preparation of the Sunday sermon,* for this is the one that is prescribed. Many people come to it who at other times are not present. It would be sinful to work out addresses for confrater-

nities carefully, and on their account to give little care to the Sunday sermon in church.

2. The sermon in church is, and will always be, the first and most excellent means of spreading God's kingdom: but it is not everywhere sufficient. The pastor of to-day, just like St. Paul, must often enough call in the *lecture* to his aid. But here one should proceed with wise caution. We should guard against introducing these lectures everywhere simply because it is the *fashion*. What is a crying need for many a city and centre of industry would be a simple waste, or even harmful, for smaller remote towns and villages. Lectures are called for only where the audience is at least partially *different* from that at sermons, or where there is need to treat before the same audience *other* important questions which are not suitable to the pulpit. In any case we must hold fast to the fact that the object of the lecture is to *supplement* the sermon, not to *replace* it, and that the lecture should gradually *lead on* to the church, and not make the latter *superfluous* or empty.

Then, again, we must be moderate in all things. If, as happens in some places, certain societies have their sermon on Sunday morning, and in the afternoon are favoured with a special instruction, and then directly after the end of the service are led into their hall to hear an address there, one cannot help asking oneself whether they are capable of taking all that in and quietly assimilating it, or whether the succeeding sermon does not displace what the first one has given the mind.

Still less success can be promised if in the meeting the address is merely an item in a programme made up also of songs, recitations, a farce or plays. Humorous

or short speeches of a useful worldly purport which suit the actual audience may be in place, but religious addresses are out of place unless it be question of a purely religious celebration in which the other parts of the programme are so arranged as to form a background to throw the address into greater relief.

3. Paul not only *spoke; he also wrote.* With what zeal he wrote, for did not his epistles have a more lasting effect than all his sermons? Let us not overlook the fact that to-day at least a new power for the conquest of the minds and hearts of men has arisen beside the pulpit; I mean the Press.

We should not confine our attention only to the religious press and ascetical books, but we should also be mindful of the daily paper, the publications of scholars, and literature proper. We should turn our attention especially to this latter, for, if un-Christian ideas become common property to-day, it is not through the books of professional philosophers which are written often in a heavy style, but because the un-Christian ideas which scholars have thought out are given artistic form by novelists and dramatists, and are put before the people in forms full of life. So they penetrate to the multitude. A gigantic power is here carrying on its destructive work, which frequently we do not pay enough attention to. What use is the short sermon on Sunday if the libraries and stage are working against it? The sermon fills up a short half-hour, while book and stage lift up their voice every day. The former comes to the hearer mostly in a restrained and quiet manner, while these with their charms know how to fascinate the imagination, the mind, the senses, and the heart. Before them the Sunday sermon often enough

dies away like the voice of one calling in the wilderness.

Where it is possible, then, we should turn novel and stage from opponents into fellow-workers. We should encourage struggling talent; we should provide good libraries, or, where that is impossible, we should try at least to keep the poison at a distance from our district. Many a town has been spoilt by *one* lending library, or by *one* Picture House; many a village by *one* bookseller's traveller.

4. When we have obtained the right opportunity for speaking, we must make good use of it. First, we must be careful to find the *right matter*.

a) In general this is already prescribed for us. "Preach the word." [13] We are to preach God's word, and not to put forward our own fancies. In the sermons of the Fathers, God's word, the Sacred Scripture, forms always the groundwork; everything else was only an explanation of it. With us it is often just the opposite: the main portion of the sermon is taken up with dogmatic, philosophical, and moral discussions, to which are attached one or two passages of Scripture as a confirmation. The cry of to-day "Back to the Scriptural sermon" is therefore only too justified. For not only does there lie a special unction and force in God's word, but from merely a natural point of view the Scriptures know much better than all human art how to put the deepest truths in a clear, impressive, and intelligible manner: and in the psychical analysis of human life, it is excelled by none. How cold, for example, is the ethical teaching in a theological manual;

[13] 2 Tim. 4:2.

and how full of life and how stirring are the same truths in the history of Abraham, David, Joseph of Egypt, and others.

In order to give *good* and not merely commonplace and worn-out Scriptural sermons, a more industrious and considerably improved study of Scripture is necessary. Exegesis had become here and there a far too one-sided philological study of the text and an exposition of words. It certainly explained the meaning of *individual* passages, gave the various explanations of the Catholic writers of the past, but it introduced one too little into the historical background and to the circumstances of the time. It did not train one sufficiently to get deep insight into the character of Holy Writ and to work out the leading thoughts in broad outlines. It acted too much like the surgeon, who takes the corpse and dissects it—every little part of the body lies by itself, exactly described—but the body as a whole is broken up and no longer thought of. To the disintegrating work of the researcher, which is necessary, there must be added—and this is even more necessary—the progressive skill which, with expert view, brings the past together again as members of one whole.

There was lack of proper direction; there was lack of personal study. To many priests the Scriptures are practically a book closed with seven seals! They know all manner of theological or literary works, but not the Book of books, the very source from which, after all, all wisdom comes. This is surely a crying incongruity!

It is, moreover, a great *loss*. There are many who find preaching difficult. What subject is to be treated? where is the matter to be obtained? how is it to be used and arranged impressively? These are questions which they put to themselves every week. How much

easier they could find it if they understood God's word in the way shown above. It is only necessary when regularly meditating on it to make notes at the time under certain key-words, and soon one would have together thoughts, examples, and applications for a series of sermons.

But if the Scriptures are to exercise their full effect, they must not only be scientifically worked up, but they must also be piously meditated. "Son of man, . . . *eat* this book and go speak to the children of Israel . . . *thy bowels shall be filled with this book.*" [14]

"And I did eat it," said the prophet, "and it was sweet as honey in my mouth. And he said to me: Son of man, go to the house of Israel, and thou shalt speak my words to them." [15]

The priest must first digest the divine book of revelation; he must fill his soul entirely with it; then it will be to himself also like honey, and will taste like honey to the people also.

"But continue thou in those things which thou hast learned, and which have been committed to thee: knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and because *from thy infancy thou hast known the holy scriptures,* which can instruct thee to salvation, by the faith which is in Christ Jesus. *All scripture, inspired of God, is profitable to teach, to reprove, to correct, to instruct in justice. That the man of God may be perfect, furnished to every good work.*" [16]

b) True though it be, that the Scriptures must be utilized more, let us guard against being one-sided in this respect. *Tradition* stands equally alongside the

[14] Ezech. 3: 1, 3. [15] *Ib.* v. 3. [16] 2 Tim. 3: 14-17.

Scriptures. "But continue thou in *those things which thou hast learned, and which have been committed to thee:* knowing of whom thou hast learned them." [17] "Keep that which is *committed to thy trust.*" [18]

Theology is the second source of Christian eloquence, and for this reason there must be solid study of it. Instead of going to fourth- and fifth-hand sources, the preacher should rather have recourse to the chief works of ecclesiastical science. What profit would, e.g., the works of St. Thomas Aquinas, Suarez, St. Bonaventure, Scheeben, Heinrich, and others bring him? And along with the Scriptural sermon there must necessarily go the carefully planned sermon that is built up *on* logical and psychological lines, because for many apologetic, dogmatic, and moral purposes it is the only effective form.

c) But it is not sufficient to use the proper sources; the *right material* must be brought forth from them.

Not everything is useful to everyone in the same way. In the pulpit the preacher should not occupy himself with remote theological *subtleties,* nor deal with altogether uncertain novelties; they may serve to sharpen wits in a lecture, but they are not suitable to the pulpit. "But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law. For they are unprofitable and vain." [19]

Still less should purely *secular* subjects be dragged into the holy place. "But shun profane and vain babblings: for they grow much towards ungodliness." [20]

Furthermore, let us keep clear of all *questions that are fought over in the theological schools.* What is the

[17] *Ib.* v. 14.
[18] 1 Tim. 6:20.
[19] Tit. 3:9.
[20] 2 Tim. 2:16.

use of drawing the faithful into such disputes in which after all it is mostly a question of things that are uncertain and cannot be proved. "And avoid foolish and unlearned questions, knowing that they beget strifes. But the servant of the Lord must not wrangle: but be mild towards all men, apt to teach, patient." [21]

Still more, let us guard against controversy with those who differ from us. A refutation of the opinions of others may be unavoidable now and again, but on the whole the words hold good: "What have I to do with judging those without?" [22] And if a refutation is necessary, let it remain always objective, and not descend to the level of our opponents in their abuse of us Catholics. "A man that is a heretic, after the first and second admonition, avoid: knowing that he that is such an one is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned by his own judgement." [23]

d) In opposition to all these errors, the preacher should offer his hearers sound spiritual food, "embracing that faithful word which *is according to doctrine,* that he may be able to exhort in *sound* doctrine, and convince the gainsayers." [24]

This *sound doctrine* consists, first of all, in sound *ethical and ascetical doctrine.* "That the aged men be sober, chaste, prudent, sound in faith, in love, in patience. The aged women, in like manner, in holy attire, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teaching well: that they may teach the young women . . . to be discreet, chaste, sober, having a care of the house, gentle, obedient to their husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed. Young men, in like manner,

[21] 2 Tim. 2:23, 24.
[22] 1 Cor. 5:12, W. V.
[23] Tit. 3:10, 11.
[24] *Ib.* 1:9.

exhort that they be sober." [25] "Exhort servants to be obedient to their masters, in all things pleasing, not gainsaying: not defrauding, but in all things showing good fidelity." [26]

Then it consists also in *sound dogma.* "For the grace of God our Saviour hath appeared to all men; instructing us, that, denying ungodliness and worldly desires, we should live soberly, and justly, and godly in this world, looking for the blessed hope and coming of the glory of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and might cleanse to himself a people acceptable, a pursuer of good works." [27]

All these truths are of a kind to illumine, to elevate, and to bring life to perfection: "These things are good and profitable unto men." [28]

Yet, in the choice of matter, the *needs of the time and of our present hearers* must always be taken into consideration. The more highly educated twentieth century, moved by a mass of questions, presents other claims than the age of Louis XIV; a country parish, other claims than those of a city.

The preacher should be a leader and point out the way in all modern perplexities, but only too often the hearers go away empty as regards questions of the day. In the choice of our themes we keep too much to the old sermon literature instead of learning from life. We overlook the fact that in the meantime entirely new questions have arisen which imperatively demand an answer, and entirely new tendencies which require consideration; that men are better informed than formerly, and are not satisfied with the current answer, but seek

[25] *Ib.* 2:2-6. [26] *Ib.* vv. 9, 10. [27] *Ib.* vv. 11-14. [28] *Ib.* 3:8.

to grasp the whole of the Church's teaching in a deeper way in every respect and to place it in its relation to other intellectual movements.

All this necessitates a new *choice of sermons.* New problems must be taken up, new themes worked out. In this way treasures which still lie buried in the "Depositum Fidei" will be put into circulation. Before composing his sermon a priest should not look first in his library of sermon books, but at life with all its dangers, and study its needs, diseases, doubts, and desires and only then should he open his bookcase, in order to choose the right remedy. Then the sermon itself would be new, stimulating, and effective. For a sermon grips the more, and is the more fruitful, the better it hits that about which the hearer of it is preoccupied at the time. The old world cried out for redemption, and it was the Redeemer whom Paul preached—that was why he was welcomed so joyfully.

e) We should guard also against a not infrequent *narrowness of view.* Certain popular expressions that are always in vogue may account for such narrow-mindedness.

It is said, "You must preach *practical* sermons." Certainly that is quite right, but by "practical sermons" some people understand that in every sermon *definite* duties must be emphasized, *individual* instructions given, and certain evil conditions attacked. But everything that increases God's kingdom is practical: every bit of new knowledge about it, and every fresh enthusiasm for it. Certainly we must not enkindle merely empty fire of straw, but newly gained confidence in the cause; and freshly won enthusiasm, for the cause is not

empty fire of straw, for both, of themselves, exercise an influence on life. The majority of people know already *what* they have to do, but they lack the strong *stimulus* to carry it out. Let us not forget also that before the gardener gathers the fruit, he must dig and plant and manure and water the ground. How void of sense it is to judge a sermon merely by its power of driving people to the confessional! Has the gardener nothing else to do than to shake the trees in order that the rotting fruit may fall off?

"Every old woman should be able to understand everything in the sermon." This is another rule! Again, it is quite right, but a mistake if it is carried to extremes. Whoever takes merely the old woman as his norm in every theme and sentence, will not infrequently send the more educated hearers away empty, for these latter are troubled by many questions which hardly touch the former, if at all. The ideal to be aimed at remains of course to be all to all men. This, however, is often impossible; and then the priest would do well to keep in view men of education rather than others, for the latter are still well cared for in the majority of sermons. To-day the danger of speaking over the heads of one's audience is not so great, on the whole, as the other danger of remaining too commonplace.

This refers not only to the form, but to the thoughts also. The sermon should not only bring what the listener already *knows,* but also something new, which he does *not yet know,* something which is as yet *beyond his grasp.* For who pays attention to a discourse which puts before him things that he already knows? How are those who listen to the preacher to be led thereby deeper into the truths of the Church?

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5. The best building stones will not produce a work of art or a useful building if they are thrown together without any plan; and the best guns miss their effect if they are fired without aim. It is necessary, therefore, to find the right form for the proper material.

Unity is necessary in a sermon just as in a work of art. But even in this respect we must not be too narrow. On account of their lack of strict construction, the homilies of the Fathers do not find favour in the eyes of many people. But yet the main idea of the Scriptural book that is being dealt with, runs right through them like a guiding thread. And even if that were not the case, they would remain justified in spite of all. A discourse should be a work of art, but one that is calculated to *add life to life,* not one that exists merely for its own sake. It is certain that the homilies of the Fathers have been the cause of much religious knowledge and of much Christian life; and the faithful get a *wider and deeper insight* into the truths of religion by the continuous explanation of the word of God than by many a set sermon.

The justification of any way of preaching is, after all, to be measured by its *fruits,* not by pedantic rules made up in the clouds. Theory, after all, is to be measured by practice, and not conversely. It is useless to quarrel over the Fathers' method; it has been justified and shown to be efficient by the fact that it was this method that so gloriously introduced Christianity to the world. Do we really think, then, that God's grace moves only in definite lines?

Since the supernatural is built up on the natural, more careful setting of the rhetorical form may by all means be generally recommended, but in this do not let us keep strictly to *one unity only.*

The unity of a discourse may be threefold: an architectural, an organic, or a psychological unity.

a) The *architectural* unity divides the matter into definite departments, arranges them in a definite framework, often marked by numbers, and gives the speech thereby the build of a proud cathedral. The treatises of St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Bonaventure, the sermons of Bourdaloue with their main point as the foundation, the three main divisions, and just as many equally constructed and symmetrically built-up subdivisions, are examples of this kind of unity.

This unity lends perspective and clarity to the whole; it leads to an all-round consideration and penetration of the subject, does away with empty talk, and enables the hearer to follow and retain it easily. All these are, of course, great advantages, which easily explain the popularity this kind of sermon finds with many people; but it has also its disadvantages.

Many thoughts for the sake of artistic form are taken from their natural place; feeling and emotion are subordinated to the divisions; and the whole discourse, in the long run, becomes monotonous and stiff. Not infrequently, also, the effort at clearness interferes with the directness of the effect of what is said. So it happens that many moderns do not approve of it so much. Moreover, it would be a mistake to look on it as the only possible way.

b) Beside this, the *organic unity* holds a worthy place. In this, everything develops as in a tree, from one root, one fundamental thought, and that not by formal divisions, but like living cells. Just as one cell

produces another, so thought comes from thought until there stands one organic whole.

This is the kind of unity we find in Our Saviour's parables, e.g., in the parable of the Prodigal, and of Dives and Lazarus. In them everything develops artistically around one idea, and is centred around that idea, and thus the whole picture is impressive and richly coloured.

Some will hear nothing but a sermon that proves a thesis. It must start with a definition and then go on to proofs and applications. It is certainly possible to preach on the mercy of God in this way. First of all comes the explanation of what mercy is; then proofs are brought from the Scripture and the Fathers, etc. Yet, Christ went about it in another way. He gripped hold of life, depicted the wandering of the prodigal son and his being received back again by his father. This was much more calculated to bring about confidence in the mercy of God than any thesis.

Christ did not bring forward an abundance of proofs, but the lifelike truth that was represented was proof sufficient. Some truths speak for themselves, because each person feels in himself their truthfulness. Why have some poems such an effect? They too do not adduce any philosophic proofs, but they depict life so lifelike that everyone without further proof accepts their teaching. Do not let us imagine we can influence the audience merely by sermons in the style of our school: we must add to it the style of our poets. Christ did this, and the first apostles too: they *painted and described* Christ's life and sufferings, and so they won the world.

c) The *psychological* unity again runs on other lines

from the two just described. This is like a gimlet. Beginning gently, then continually widening and increasing its strength, it penetrates through all the soul's faculties systematically to the will, until it has broken through its last resistance and wrung from it a source of good resolution and impulses. While the architectural unity groups everything more round *one main idea,* and the organic unity round *a growing nucleus,* this one groups everything round a *definite end.*

We have an unparalleled example in this respect in the Lenten sermons of Segneri.

Let us take his sermon for Ash Wednesday as an example. Some preachers would be satisfied on this day with putting together some few thoughts or other on death; they would dwell on the instability of all earthly things, or the terror of death, or its uncertainty, and would attach corresponding applications to them. Not so Segneri—he does not say, I will preach *on* death, but: what do I want to effect *by* this sermon on death? Several aims were open to him: to tear away the heart from its attachment to everything earthly, to console it by pointing out the coming release from all earthly sorrows, to urge it on to a good preparation for death, etc. He chooses an even more effective one. He considers what his audience are most in need of. It is Ash Wednesday, when he has many hardened sinners before him, who have passed even the last days in unbridled debauchery. He wants to shake them at last from their sleep and to move them to a reformation of life—and all this is achieved by pointing to death. So he sets forth:

(1) It is, after all, possible that you may die in sin, and that would be terrible. (2) It is not only possible somehow or other that you may die in sin, it is *quite as*

possible as not. (3) Further, the possibility of your dying in sin is *greater* than that of not dying in it. (4) To die in sin is not only possible, but indeed highly probable, in fact practically certain, since you almost always live in sin, and dangers are thick around you.

Those are, in substance, if not in words, the four steps of his sermon. Who does not feel here how the speaker continually comes nearer to his hearers, how at last there is no escape left? It is the deliberate pursuit of a definite purpose.

d) The application of these different kinds of unity has to be adapted to the kind of sermon. What I have called architectural unity is more suited to didactic sermons and discourses, which deal with apologetics; organic unity to Scriptural sermons, short addresses, and lectures whose purpose is principally to entertain; while psychological unity is more adapted to moral sermons. To achieve a really striking success in bringing about a reformation of life, the psychological arrangement is indispensable. However, no one absolute rule can be set up for all cases.

6. Unity gives the framework of the building of the sermon, which must be filled in in accordance with the style chosen and must be embellished. That means we must find the *appropriate language in which to deliver the sermon.*

It should be intelligible, striking, beautiful, and oratorical at the same time; the sermon should not be a dull treatise, but like a bright and easy flowing brook, often a river, and now and then it should rise like a powerfully rushing stream.

Some fail by a too *affected speech.* They aim at the

most surprising expressions and words, especially nowadays. They do not seek to express their thoughts as *clearly* and effectively as possible, but in as *highly coloured* and obscure a way as possible. Yet, the opposite were more desirable. The style should not *lead the mind away* from the thought, but should only fall around it like a perfect garment, in order to show it up the more. If you read Cardinal Newman's works, you are quite taken by their contents without specially noticing the style. If, on the contrary, you read some modern authors, you stumble so much over the whimsical words and phrases, that the contents escape you. At the same time, we do not wish to deny that we can learn in many ways from modern stylists. In the fine understanding of the most delicate psychological states, in pregnant conciseness and form, in variety of expression, and in the art by which whole pictures are sketched and deep feelings are recalled with a few strokes of the pen, in all this we have advanced much beyond former writers.

Our preaching generally does not err on the side of linguistic beauty and force, but rather on that of mediocrity or its low standard.

It is said: "Preach in a simple manner," and people appeal for this to St. Paul's words: "And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not in loftiness of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of Christ." [29]

Whenever teachers of sacred eloquence recommend "Apostolic simplicity" this passage almost invariably turns up as their authority. But, also, whenever a

[29] 1 Cor. 2:1.

preacher dares to treat deeper questions in a choicer form, this same text is sure to be used as a weapon against him, or at least it is used to soothe injured vanity. Those who feel hurt by a feeling of inferiority to others, seek to reassure themselves by the excuse: "It is not brilliant sermons that do it; I agree with St. Paul: 'Not in loftiness of wisdom.' I preach simply; it is virtue that matters, not rhetoric"—and thereupon they naturally take for granted that they have the former in richer measure than others.

Now let us examine how far, and for what kind of simplicity, St. Paul's words can be brought up as witness for the prosecution. His own use of rhetoric is, after all, the best key to his theory of rhetoric.

First of all, did St. Paul always take up everyday, easily understood and well-known truths? Just read his epistles. In them he speaks of the deepest truths of God, of predestination, of grace, of the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, of redemption, of sacrifice, of the Resurrection, of the glorification of mankind, and of the creation. In what a deep mystical way he describes the relation of the soul to Christ, the dying and rising again with the Redeemer in Baptism, and the communion of all the faithful in one body whose head is Christ!

In all times the most important Fathers of the Church and theologians have had the greatest trouble in finding their way about in St. Paul's deep and sublime train of thought. And he delivered these doctrines, not in a theological lecture hall, but in the religious services of the faithful, to people to whom Christianity had up till then been something quite strange, to people who had not completed any course of catechetical instruction, to communities which to a

great extent were composed of artisans, tradesmen, and sailors, often indeed of the property-less classes of the street. As far, then, as matter is concerned, no preacher has certainly ever spoken with such depth as St. Paul. Whether that is to be imitated, is not the question I am speaking of at present; at present we are solely concerned in throwing light on the above-mentioned text.

Or does St. Paul perhaps wish to say that he despises every beautiful *oratorical form?*

It is true, St. Paul does not speak like Isocrates in artificial, often meaningless expressions, which are chosen only on account of their form; nor in the beautiful rounded periods of a Cicero; but the essential means of brilliant eloquence were at his command in a way scarcely to be found with others.

In the first place, he himself was every inch a natural orator, and not a dry teacher. Every one of his sentences is steeped in fire and life, and breathes both out again. Compare his epistles, for example, with the *Summa* of St. Thomas.

At the same time he was *wonderfully gifted.* With playful ease he runs up the whole scale of feeling: he begins from the deepest and most touching earnestness, and passes from burning indignation and holy anger through irony, melancholic sadness, touching apprehension, deep-feeling sympathy, gentle complaint, and earnest threatening, right up to the most tender love, the most intimate wooing, the most brightly glowing enthusiasm, and the joyous exultant feeling of triumph and victory. Compare with this wealth of feelings the works of other notable preachers. How dull and poor they appear in comparison with the Apostle. If it is true that "pectus est quod dissertos facit," then

the palm belongs to St. Paul among all Christian preachers.

To his natural gifts St. Paul joined the highest *art*. In many places his epistles bear the mark of work done on the spur of the moment; for example, in the long chopped sentences and in the introductions: in many places, however, there come passages which betray the most careful artistic training or born artistic genius.

Think of his antitheses: "It is sown in corruption, it shall rise in incorruption. It is sown in dishonour, it shall rise in glory. It is sown in weakness, it shall rise in power. It is sown a natural body, it shall rise a spiritual body." [30]

Or take that other passage: "But in all things let us exhibit ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in tribulation, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in prisons, in seditions, in labours, in watchings, in fastings." [31]

Or, again, the other passage: "By honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report; as deceivers, and yet true; as unknown, and yet known; as dying, and behold we live; as chastised, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as needy, yet enriching many; as having nothing, and possessing all things." [32]

Or, again, his hymn of praise to Charity: "If I speak with the tongues of men. . . . And if I should have prophecy. . . . And if I should distribute all my goods. . . . Charity is patient, is kind: . . ." [33] How striking is his description of the conditions of his soul:

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[30] 1 Cor. 15: 42ff.
[31] 2 Cor. 6: 4, 5.
[32] *Ib.* vv. 8-10.
[33] 1 Cor. 13: 1ff.

"For that which I work . . ." [34]; or that of the old civilized world: "For the invisible things of him . . ." [35]

Then how charming is his self-confession!—"Who then shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation? or distress? or famine? or nakedness? or danger? or persecution? or the sword? . . . But in all these things we overcome, because of him that hath loved us." [36]

What power, what beauty of form speak from all this! And how numerous are such passages! Indeed, his epistles are almost entirely compiled of such rhetorical figures. How everything glitters, how it shines, how it sparkles, and moves in them! If there is scarcely any theologian who has spoken so learnedly as St. Paul, there is also hardly an orator who has spoken with such rhetorical brilliance and artistic skill as he has done. One thing is certain: intellectual subtleties and brilliant affectation are far from him; but everything that genuine knowledge offered in depth, and that art offered in beauty, St. Paul made his own in the highest degree.

Let people, then, leave off upholding a poor style of preaching by referring to him.

Like St. Paul in this matter are the Fathers of the Church. What beauty, what depth and power are to be found in the work of St. Basil, St. Augustine, St. Ambrose, St. Gregory, and St. John Chrysostom. All these stood intellectually, aesthetically, and from a literary point of view high above their hearers and contemporaries. They began by approaching the level of their hearers, only to lift them up to their own heights.

[34] Rom. 7:15. [35] *Ib.* 1:20. [36] *Ib.* 8:35-37.

What they put before their hearers was in every way of high quality, and hence their success.

7. But we must use common sense in our methods. Besides having unity of plan and goodness of form, what we say must be suited to those listening to us. This is a self-evident quality but one often neglected. We choose subjects and methods of treatment just as we find them, and do not ask ourselves whether those listening to us will be helped by them. Or we preach about the misdeeds of those who are not present, to the small advantage of those who are present and are anxious to be helped. Sometimes a preacher will spend his time refuting errors which have not touched the common run of people and never will. It is foolish to trouble them with such things and not to give them healthy food.

Or, conversely, a preacher refutes errors which are obsolete, and overlooks new ones which are current among the people. Donatus, who has been dead and gone long since, is attacked, while Nietzsche, who still exercises a strong influence, is left undisturbed. Or simple country folk have given them the sermons of a modern city preacher, while sermons prepared for country folk are repeated to city congregations.

That a sermon should be suited to those who hear it, is overlooked when it is a question of *sermons preached by others*. If a preacher departs in anything from the manner in vogue, he is blamed, especially if he be a preacher who creates some stir.

"Idle literary affectation!" people say. "You must preach the catechism." The catechism *truths*—concedo; in the catechism *form*—distinguo: if it is in place, yes; otherwise no. The catechism is, after all,

meant only as a first introduction for children and ignorant people, not as the one and only book for all. Did Christ, St. Paul, and the Fathers of the Church always speak in the catechism form? The Father of the catechism, St. Peter Canisius, in his great discourses often used a quite different method.

Some people are particularly annoyed if speakers bring in poets, philosophers, defenders of women's rights, etc. One should certainly be very cautious in this respect in the pulpit, but why so in addresses?

The Munich catechetical method insists again and again on the observance of the law of apperception, by which the teacher or speaker starts from the present feelings and knowledge of the listeners and leads them on from that. This is the object of some speakers and writers against whom the objection is made. They start with plays which their hearers see, with poets and philosophical writings which they read, with the lectures they have heard, and on that they build up the Catholic doctrine of faith and morals. This method, then, is nothing else than the Munich catechetical method used on a greater scale; it is nothing else than the method of St. Ignatius, who advises us to find an entrance into the hearers by their own ideas, and to lead them out again with ours.

In a masterly fashion St. Paul and the other apostles knew how to adapt themselves. When St. Paul spoke to the Jews, he made great use of rabbinical language and methods of proof; but when he spoke to the pagan philosophers on the Areopagus, he at once struck a different note. St. Matthew wrote his Gospel for the Hebrews; St. John wrote chiefly for the Hellenistic world. Accordingly, the one differs fundamentally from the other. St. Matthew clothed Jesus of Nazareth

in all the colours in use among the Jewish people, and represented Him as the promised Messias. St. John, on the contrary, adapted his gospel to Grecian ideas and expressions. He spoke of the Logos, of the Light, of Life, of regeneration, etc. St. Matthew spoke, if I might say so, more in the language of the catechism; St. John more in that of the educated world with some philosophical and æsthetic training. And so today, when alongside of these simple souls who have been brought up in the formulas of the catechism, there are so many with our modern education and outlook, we should be allowed to imitate the many-sided way of the first messengers of the Faith.

We should beware especially of judging everything by *ourselves*. For many "Self" is the standard of everything. "This sermon would not have made any impression on me!" Perhaps not; but you are not the only man, still less are you a "universal man," for this latter does not exist at all. Each person is an individual. What does not please *you*, has possibly all the greater effect on others. Its success is proof of that. The fact that so many flock to that speaker or writer should certainly make you reflect.

The apple tree could say: "Now what has this pear tree done, after all? With this form, this long shape, and yellow colour of its fruit, it is inconceivable that so many eat of it. It ought to have used its material better, it should have shaped another kind of head and round rosy fruit, as I do: then its effect would be excellent, but as it is . . .?" Now the apple tree is good, but so is the pear tree; the same is true of the plum and the peach equally, and all have their fanciers. So it is with preachers. You are an apple tree, I am a pear tree. You do your work well, but leave me to

mine. Many who like apples will come to you, but some will prefer to stretch out their hands to my fruit. "For why is my liberty judged by another man's conscience?" [37]

We should show this broadness of mind and broadness of view especially towards *younger men who show talent.* Many of these suffer a partial martyrdom, and are ruined. The motives of ambition, of desiring merely to please, and of pride are attributed to them. But surely envy, which cannot tolerate the brilliant, is a much greater kind of pride! We should not suppress them, even if they have some peculiarities, but should do as the gardener does, who gives a right direction to, cares for, and cultivates the young tree.

It is strange how a clever non-Catholic speaker or writer finds favour with all, while any talent that appears among ourselves is gainsaid by many.

But the best prepared sermon falls flat if it is not properly given out. Outer form must be joined to the inner form, the bearing, the voice, the language of gesture, all need a constant training. In this regard much is wanting. Especially is there too little practice in the technic of breathing and voice production. Hence the sad result that many a voice gives way before its time. What trouble opera singers take for years with this, "And they indeed that they may receive a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible one." [38]

8. The matter and form in themselves are not sufficient: there must also be *the proper spirit.* . . . For the letter kills, but the spirit quickeneth.

[37] 1 Cor. 10:29. [38] *Ib.* 9:25.

The whole sermon should proceed from *love* of God and of souls. Without this all will remain cold. "If I speak with the tongues of men, and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal." [39]

Where there is love, the necessary power of persuasion and the right word will come naturally, and the right accent which reaches hearts will be hit upon.

The whole sermon too should breathe *unselfishness*. "For we are not as many, adulterating the word of God; but with sincerity, but as from God, before God in Christ we speak." [40] *"Adulterantes"*—such are those preachers who make the word of God subserve their vanity, ambition, or lust of power. This is a desecration of a holy office, to rob God of His gifts in order to trick oneself out with them!

"These things speak . . . *with all authority*." [41] That is, to preach the word with the consciousness of power, and not like a petitioner who will be grateful if his hearers listen to his words. The preacher stands there as God's messenger before the multitude. "For Christ therefore we are ambassadors, God as it were exhorting by us." [42] These words should always be before the preacher's eyes. He should therefore come forward with power, emphasis, and the full conviction of his high mission and claim to conquer.

He should not give way to any *fear of men*. "Be instant in season, *out of season*, reprove, entreat!" He should say to himself with St. Paul: "But to me it is a very small thing to be judged by you, or by man's day; but neither do I judge my own self . . . but he that judgeth me is the Lord." [43] He must not speak

[39] 1 Cor. 13:1. [41] Tit. 2:15. [43] 1 Cor. 4:3, 4.
[40] 2 Cor. 2:17. [42] 2 Cor. 5:20.

to please men, but God: "Or do I seek to please men? If I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ." [44]

So he must come forward with *determination* for God's cause, and not keep back from the people, as many fearful souls do, the bitter truths. Subservience is unworthy of an apostle. Courage is needed even in the pulpit, and especially to-day "when men will not endure sound doctrine." "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power." [45] How courageously many petty sects speak to the people of sin and of penance, and with good effect. We should, then, not be cowardly in holding back the more solemn truths. "Cry, cease not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their wicked doings!" [46]

Let us not deceive ourselves. It is not the preacher who scatters flowers, or who misleads souls as to their true state who pleases most in the long run—for the conscience of those who listen to us will make a way for itself—but the one who earnestly insists on improvement, and lights up all the secret recesses of the heart. Despite all temporary attacks, St. Paul was, after all, the most popular preacher. Why? "I also in all things please all men, not seeking that which is profitable to myself, but *to many*, that they may be saved." [47] All those who listen to us want to save their souls, and realize quite well who is really helpful.

When the preacher has obtained the right opportunity for speaking, and has made matter and form his own, and is animated with the right spirit, there is yet one thing without which he will grow weary before

[44] Gal. 1:10.
[45] 2 Tim. 1:7.
[46] Is. 58:1.
[47] 1 Cor. 10:33.

his time: "in all patience." [48] No virtue is more necessary for a preacher than patience. Many explanations will not be understood, many warnings will remain unheeded, many evil conditions will continue to grow apace. But Christ foretold that in the parable of the Sower. Much of God's word sown by us will fall on hard ground, other among thorns, but much will also bring forth fruit thirty, and one hundred fold. Some of those who listen to us will be indifferent; others will agree with their words, but not with their hearts; but also there are many true souls whom every priest will get to know, who listen to him with a holy hunger for righteousness. "Those are they who in a good and perfect heart, hearing the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit in patience." [49]

Let the priest keep these in mind; the farmer does not keep in mind the seeds that have disappeared, but those that are growing up to waving fields of corn. For these he works on unwearied, knowing that his work is not in vain: "Therefore I endure all things *for the sake of the elect,* that they may obtain the salvation, which is in Christ Jesus, with heavenly glory." [50]

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[48] 2 Tim. 4:2. [49] Luke 8:15. [50] 2 Tim. 2:10.

CHAPTER VII

"A Soldier of Christ"

THE work of a priest is, as a rule, a work of peace. As a priest he offers sacrifice at the altar to reconcile the world with God; as a wise architect he builds God's temples throughout the land; and as a sower he sows God's seed in the furrows for the peaceful harvest. But for him also there come times when he must put aside apron and trowel, put down the seed cloth, leave the altar, and turn the ploughshare into a sword in order to enter the battlefield as a warrior of Christ. "Labour as a good soldier of Christ Jesus." [1]

In his epistle to the Ephesians, St. Paul *gives us his idea* of the good soldier of Christ: "Finally, brethren, be strengthened in the Lord, and in the might of his power. Put you on the armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the deceits of the devil. For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood; but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the world of this darkness, against the spirits of wickedness in the high places. Therefore take unto you the armour of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and to stand in all things perfect. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of justice, and your feet shod with the

[1] 2 Tim. 2:3.

preparation of the gospel of peace: in all things taking the shield of faith, wherewith you may be able to extinguish all the fiery darts of the most wicked one. And take unto you the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit (which is the word of God)." [2]

This passage contains our entire plan of campaign, the call to arms, and our equipment.

I

"Accipite armaturam Dei! *Est* enim nobis *colluctatio!*"

1. As the life of every man is a warfare, so in a greater degree should that of a priest be. In the first place, he should be marked out by a higher personal perfection than the ordinary run of the faithful: but no virtue is acquired without much fighting. "When thou comest to the service of God, . . . prepare thy soul for temptation." [3]

As one of the faithful, the priest already has his place in the *army of Our Saviour.* He is the *soldier of Christ:* and here is a new ground for battle, since Christ is a sign which will be contradicted. "For what participation hath justice with injustice? Or what fellowship hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial?" [4]

Christ came in order to destroy the stronghold of our enemy, the powers of hell. "For this purpose, the Son of God appeared, that he might destroy the works of the devil." [5] No wonder, then, that all the powers of hell rise up in war against Him and His kingdom, and

[2] Eph. 6: 10-17.
[3] Ecclus. 2: 1.
[4] 2 Cor. 6: 14.
[5] 1 John 3: 8.

that the whole rage of the powers of darkness is directed against him who commands Christ's troops; namely, the priest. Flesh and blood rise up continually against Christ's law: but not only is our warfare "against flesh and blood, but against *principalities and powers.*" The powers that be are also at war, for the most part, with Christianity: and then the Apostle says: "against the *rulers of the world of this darkness*"; that is, not only the heads of States, but other leaders of the people, heads of political parties, poets, philosophers, teachers, secret societies—among all these are to be found enemies of the Church who declare war on the Son of God. To all these are added "the spirits of wickedness," the spirit of hatred of God, of denial of God which comes from the depths below. It is almost as if the picture of the Apocalypse were realized before our very eyes. "And I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns, like a lamb, and he spoke as a dragon. And he executed all the power of the former beast in his sight; and he caused the earth, and them that dwell therein, to adore the first beast, whose wound to death was healed. And he did great signs, so that he made also fire to come down from heaven into the earth in the sight of men. And he seduced them that dwell on the earth, for the signs, which were given him to do in the sight of the beast, saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make the image of the beast, which had the wound by the sword, and lived. And it was given him to give life to the image of the beast, and that the image of the beast should speak; and should cause, that whosoever will not adore the image of the beast, should be slain. And he shall make all, both little and great,

rich and poor, freemen and bondmen, to have a character in their right hand, or on their foreheads." [6]

This attack of our enemies might make some lose courage, but it should please us, for persecution is always the lot of true prophets. "Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted?" [7] And Christ foretold to His disciples, "If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you." [8] And these attacks show that the right spirit exists. "If the world hate you, know ye, that it hath hated me before you. If you had been of the world, the world would love its own: but because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." [9]

2. Some priests shun the fight. Some of them shun it through *love of ease*. It is true that they fulfil their duties in the school and in the church; they baptise and bury; but, apart from that, they prefer to sit in their armchairs rather than take part in the fight outside. Others, again, shrink from every collision with opponents on account of *their gentle nature*, or *their attraction to a quiet contemplative life*. Others, again, *from policy, because they do not wish to spoil themselves with certain parties and classes*. The man of peace stands in much higher favour with lukewarm Catholics and with the Church's enemies than the "zealot." Finally, some allow themselves to be influenced by modern catch phrases such as "Disturbance of religious peace," "Ultramontanism"; or they fear to hinder their getting on in this world by resolutely standing up for God's cause. "They love," according to Christ's own words, "the glory of men more than the

[6] Apoc. 13: 11-16.
[7] Acts 7: 52.
[8] John 15: 20.
[9] *Ib.* vv. 18, 19.

glory of God." [10] Then, again, certain sections of the world by one means or another have a masterly skill in keeping some priests servile and silent.—All these inactive men forget the Apostle's words, "I am set for the defence of the gospel." [11] When we are left in peace, it may be right for our swords to rust in the scabbard; but when we are attacked, we must unsheath them.

3. How hot, especially to-day, the fight has become! The kingdom of Christ is attacked on all hands; in the schools and in the press, in literature and art, in pamphlets and scientific works, in medicine and trade, in home politics, in religious assemblies, in new kinds of amusements and dances, in the fashions and the laws, in the lodges and unions. He who above all others is called to be the watchman of Sion's walls, the responsible shepherd of souls, the one ordained by God to be the defender of the deposit of faith, may not look on with folded arms while the enemies of God destroy. What would become of the Lord's flock?

Certainly the genial, quiet type like Heli, is more popular with the Church's enemies, than men of zeal like Matthathias: but do they serve God's cause better than the latter? What would have become of Christ's Church without a St. Athanasius, a St. John Chrysostom, a St. Augustine, a St. Dominic, a St. Peter Canisius? It is always suspicious if a priest is praised much by the Church's enemies. Only too frequently it is a sign that they do not consider him dangerous. "Woe to you when men shall bless you: for according to these things did their fathers to the false prophets." [12]

[10] *Ib.* 12:43. [11] Philip. 1:16. [12] Luke 6:26.

It would certainly be incompatible with the Christian spirit, to pick a quarrel or to carry it on with poisoned weapons. Many a fighting-man of naturally pugnacious spirit has seriously failed in this respect and harmed Christ's cause. But it would be equally un-Christian, on the other hand, to shrink from a justifiable fight, in order not to offend others. Our opponents often try to contrast the forbearance of Christ with the fighting spirit of the bishops and priests of Rome. They succeed only by giving a quite incorrect picture of Christ's true character. No one was so merciful as the Son of God; but when it was necessary, no one could be so full of fighting spirit as He, for His public ministry, for the most part, consisted in a continual strife against Judaism.

St. Paul did not shrink from the fight for truth for the sake of religious peace. He attacked the error in the most out of the way places. He vigorously stood up for his rights as a "Roman citizen" and as an Apostle of Jesus Christ. He was not ashamed even to appeal to Caesar,[13] in order to preserve his honour.

The Apostle impressed on his disciples and followers the same duty of fighting: "This precept I commend to thee, O son Timothy; according to the prophecies going before on thee, that thou war in them a good warfare." [14] "For there shall be a time, when they will not endure sound doctrine; but, according to their own desires, they will heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears: and will indeed turn away their hearing from the truth, but will be turned unto fables. *But be thou vigilant, labour in all things, do the work of an evangelist, fulfil thy ministry.*" [15] "Take heed to

[13] Acts 25: 11. [14] 1 Tim. 1: 18. [15] 2 Tim. 4: 3-5.

yourselves, and to the whole flock, wherein the Holy Ghost hath placed you bishops, to rule the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. I know that, after my departure, ravening wolves will enter in among you, not sparing the flock. And of your own selves shall arise men speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch." [16]

Motive is piled on motive! Since "the Holy Ghost hath placed you bishops," the fight is a matter of duty; since you are "to rule the church . . ." the good of the Church demands it; without leadership and direction this Church will be beaten in the fight. "The church of God" planted by God, which is so dear to his heart, and which alone brings salvation to man, is threatened. "Which he hath purchased with his own blood," and which cannot therefore be delivered up to enemies!

The circumstances of the time must be taken into account. "Know also this, that, in the last days, shall come dangerous times." [17] To-day if ever the words apply: "sharpen the arrows, fill the quivers. . . . Upon the walls of Babylon set up the standard, . . . set up the watchmen." [18]

Not only in the pulpit and confessional, but in all departments of life, the priest to-day must wage war against error and sin. He must keep his eye on everything: on daily papers, libraries, the new books that come out; on house to house sales, trade, theatres, festivities, pleasures, the formation of clubs, on children's games, and the mixing together of young people: nothing should escape him, for to-day the serpent creeps in everywhere. The priest should be on the look-out to crush its head directly it appears.

[16] Acts 20: 28-31. [17] 2 Tim. 3: 1. [18] Jer. 51: 11, 12.

He should also come down with courage into the lists of public life when it is necessary. But in everything he should remain conscious of his position as a soldier of Christ. Only where *Christ's cause* is endangered should he draw the sword *as a priest.* He should leave other battles to other people, since such battles only raise up enemies to the priesthood unnecessarily. "No man, being a soldier to God, entangleth himself with secular businesses; that he may please him to whom he hath engaged himself." [19] And in *our way of fighting* we must always keep alive in us the thought that we are soldiers of Christ.

How, then, are we to fight?

II

"For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty to God unto the pulling down of fortifications, destroying counsels, and every height that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringeth into captivity every understanding unto the obedience of Christ; and having in readiness to revenge all disobedience." [20]

1. In the first place, we have to notice that the weapons of our warfare are not carnal.

a) Our weapons are not carnal: this means that they are not merely natural ones. "That which is born of the flesh, is flesh: and that which is born of the spirit, is spirit." [21]

Carnal weapons, then, would be purely natural knowledge, external influence, power, mere worldly shrewd-

[19] 2 Tim. 2:4. [20] 2 Cor. 10:3-6. [21] John 3:6.

ness, political expedients. Though these can and should be used within proper limits, yet they do not suffice to save God's kingdom. "For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood; . . . but against the spirits of wickedness in the high places." [22] Supernatural powers are overcome by supernatural means alone. Our first weapon is, and always will be, *dependence on God:* "the weapons of our warfare" are in *"the power of God,"* power from God and through God. *God's grace alone decides the final issue in these fights, and for this reason we must use those means, above all, which prepare hearts for the reception of grace.*

These are not proud knowledge, but humble faith; not a display of one's own power, but a child-like seeking for help from God. In this respect the rationalistic period of the eighteenth century, because it did away with the Church's feasts and devotions, rosaries and pilgrimages, was a great failure. A similar failure falls to those reformers of to-day who think that the Church is to be improved chiefly by greater power among Catholics, by greater riches, by better education, or taking part in politics, and by a greater share in profane knowledge and art. All these things may here and there afford modest aids to God's kingdom, but they are not of decisive influence. There have been times when the Church held all these earthly gifts in her hand. Rome in the time of Leo X was the seat of the Muses and of mammon, the seat of the greatest influence; and yet it was precisely at that period that the Church suffered the most serious harm through the great apostasy and the prevailing moral depravity. Material things have never bettered mankind religiously.

[22] Eph. 6: 12.

It is not æstheticism but asceticism that leads men nearer to God. Dante and Petrarch were dazzling lights. They delighted men; but the winning of souls for Christ was reserved to the poor disciple of Jesus Christ from Assisi. It was for this reason that Christ disregarded all earthly means of power: He taught His followers to pray, to do without, to deny themselves, to bear the cross, and to suffer—from this He promised Himself success. Do we think ourselves wiser than He?

Do not let us expect too much either from our *social undertakings,* from *sport and games,* in our young men's societies and the like. All this is absolutely necessary, if wisely used, but of itself is not enough. If we keep the faithful bound to us only, or, for the most part, by merely worldly considerations, their whole religion will not only remain merely external, but it will soon break down under serious trials.

The large crowds who followed Our Saviour after the multiplication of the loaves are instructive in this respect. They were seeking for Him even in the early morning in Capharnaum, and who could doubt the sincerity of their intentions? Yet, Christ saw through them: "You seek me, not because you have seen miracles, but because you did eat of the loaves, and were filled." [23] Their interest had not risen above their material advantage: it had not penetrated to the spiritual import of the miracle. This is shown only too clearly by what followed, for as Our Saviour, leading them further said: "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that which endureth unto life everlasting," [24] and propounded to them the mystery of the

[23] John 6:26. [24] *Ib.* v. 27.

Holy Eucharist, they said: "This saying is hard, who can hear it?" [25] and "After this many of his disciples went back; and walked no more with him." [26] And it is instructive to notice that Christ let them go. With Him it was not a question of obtaining as many adherents as possible, but only genuine disciples who made His inner spirit their own. We have similar types among ourselves. There is a danger in the material help we give to our communicants and others, of accustoming people to look to Christianity and the Church for material help only. When they are refused help, we often hear them say: "Then I'll become a Protestant." Where is the fault? We have consistently encouraged selfishness, instead of insisting on its mortification.

The same thing is found in other classes. Many of our working or educated people at once threaten openly or covertly to apostatise if the Church no longer offers them worldly advantages, learning and art, freedom and power. All these people attach themselves to Christ, not on account of what is *higher and spiritual,* but because they are anxious to eat of His *earthly bread.* And when this is no longer offered them, they fall away. We must train them again to a right mind. The purpose of the Church is not to give earthly bread, but the food that "endureth unto life everlasting." That we must make clear to all.

In our pastoral work we make great provision for the needs of our educated laity. That is quite right. We *must* consider them in a special way. But all that we offer them, whether in science or art, in lectures or liturgical courses, fulfil their purpose only if they form,

[25] *Ib.* v. 61. [26] *Ib.* v. 67.

as it were, a bridge leading over to a deeper spiritual life. If this latter is not the final result of all that we provide for them, our efforts will have been in vain. The educated and uneducated alike depend for spiritual progress on *grace*. Grace, however, comes to those who ask humbly and live rightly, not to the proud student, or the slave of passions. The words still hold good: "I confess to thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones. Yea, Father, for so hath it seemed good in thy sight." [27]

In the Renaissance period an attempt was made to attach the world to the Church by those very means which are recommended to-day with such insistence—and the result? The WORLD did not become CHRISTIAN, but CHRISTIANITY became WORLDLY.

The attempt was futile, but that was not clearly seen until the great apostasy had come in Germany, and until in Italy the grim sack of Rome had laid the temple of the Muses in dust and ashes: only then did right ideas win their way. There, in the midst of the ruins of the old splendour, simple priests and enlightened layfolk in a small church of Rome formed themselves into a sacred alliance, the Oratory of divine love. They proposed to make good the ravages of the Church, not like their predecessors by art, learning, power, and display of pomp, but by reviving the public worship of God, the reception of the sacraments, works of charity and penance. The small circle spread rapidly over all Italy and other countries. From it came forth new institutions and orders. It became the pioneer of real reform, and the pioneer of God's kingdom. Once

[27] Matt. 11:25, 26.

again it was the ascetical, the deepened inner spiritual life which saved the Church, and not æsthetics. How true it is that "the weapons of our warfare are not carnal."

We should learn, then, from history. The periods of eighteenth century Rationalism and of the Renaissance were both times of wide-reaching attempts to advance Christ's cause by carnal weapons—the latter by zeal for the beautiful; the former by a cold one-sided rationalism. Both proved futile. Do not let us put another unsuccessful attempt alongside them, by recommending measures of social reform as if they alone are sufficient. It may be good here and there to call to our aid carnal arms, but the armour of God alone can give us complete victory.

In all our zeal for improvement, we must not forget to make ourselves into true men of God, and to try to lead others to the interior life. If our success is at first small, we should not be discouraged, for a little heavenly leaven soon leavens the whole mass.

b) Our weapons are not carnal!—this means, further, that they are not such as give pain to the body with the object of forcing the spirit. Mohammed spread his kingdom by burning and ravaging and enslaving; but Christ as the Prince of peace, prepared the way for His Gospel by peaceful means. It is true that with great emphasis and solemn earnestness He imposed on all, the duty of whole-heartedly fighting under His banner; but He brought no one under His yoke by force. Corporal punishment inflicted because of false doctrine was unknown to Him. He sent the apostles forth with the Gospel, not with fetters and

manacles. He gave them the command: "Go ye forth, *teach* and *baptise*," not *"put in fetters and compel."*

Though, according to His teaching, the stiff-necked do not escape punishment, judgement is reserved for them in the next world. To His disciples who wanted forthwith to call down fire, He cried: "You know not of what spirit you are. The Son of man is not come to destroy but to save." [28] The servants who wished at once to tear up the cockle by the roots found no favour with Him, for the wheat too would easily have been damaged by such violence, and the time of the harvest would be time enough to prevent the cockle from doing harm. The punishment of the obstinate which Jesus recommended to His disciples was: "And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words: going out of that house or city shake off the dust from your feet. Amen I say to you, it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgement, than for that city." [29]

Christ did not leave His Church without the power of punishing—"And having in readiness to revenge all disobedience" [30]—but it is of a *spiritual nature*. Bodily castigations were not recommended by either Christ or His Apostle. Faith is a matter of free will. Violent measures are not lasting: they also naturally produce the opposite of piety. Instead of Christians, they easily breed hypocrites, as is shown by the example of the Maranos, who were Jews converted by force in Spain. Very often they give birth to embittered enemies of the Church. Not only the history of the Renaissance and of eighteenth century Rationalism, but also that of the persecution of heretics urge

[28] Luke 9: 55, 56. [29] Matt. 10: 14, 15. [30] 2 Cor. 10: 6.

us to great caution regarding the use of carnal weapons. No one to-day thinks of digging up these weapons, but it is possible to talk lightly of using other methods of compulsion; and there are cases in which transgressors have been alienated from the Church by a too rigorous use of methods which were in themselves justifiable. Religious instruction and confession are sometimes heartily disliked because of too great severity.

c) Our weapons are not carnal! This means, finally, that they are not of *the flesh,* i.e., suggested by anger, ambition, wounded pride, revenge, or pleasure in the discomfort of others; they are not weapons that are used in the service of carnal wisdom, such as underhand dealing, deceitfulness, fraud, betrayal of secrets, eavesdropping, intrigue, and dishonourable wily diplomacy. All these arts may find place in the kingdom of this world, but they do not belong to the kingdom of God.

2. With what kind of arms does St. Paul wish the soldier of Christ to be supplied? They are to be such as are *spiritual:* "Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of justice, and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace: in all things taking the shield of faith, wherewith you may be able to extinguish all the fiery darts of the most wicked one. And take unto you the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit (which is the word of God). By all prayer . . . praying at all times in the spirit; and in the same watching with all instance and supplication for all the saints." [31]

[31] Eph. 6: 14-18.

a) The first weapon, then, is *"the sword of the spirit"* (which is the word of God).

Christ demands a reasonable service from His own, and as a first means He gives the command: "Go into the whole world and *teach* all creatures." By teaching and explaining, we are to suppress error and to drive the powers of darkness from places where they lurk. Truth is still powerful. Thought still rules the world. Men still surrender to truths that are preached with conviction; and the spoken word has perhaps more influence to-day than ever before. Greater still is the power of the word of God, the infallible truth. So it was in the past, so it must be now. Men may try their best, but in the end no one can escape the truth. If we always firmly oppose the teaching of our Faith to the errors of the day, the victory must in the end be ours. Truth speaks for itself. Even so the sun rising in full brilliance is its own recommendation and apology: hearts instinctively salute it with joy. And in the case of truth, even if prejudices arise in the human heart, the love of truth condemns the lie and decides for the truth. Not that we can do without formal defence and argument: those who listen to us ask for a definite answer to a definite attack. The value of this merits due recognition. But the best defence and recommendation of the truth remains the calm clearly developed explanation of the truth.

b) As a servant of the truth, the priest must be, as it were, entirely clothed with truth as with a garment: "having your loins girt about with truth:" *There should be perfect truthfulness in the personal conduct of the priest.* He should be a thoroughly straightforward honourable man. He should really be what he

appears to be. All pretence, all cunning, all crooked diplomacy, every kind of double dealing or underhand dealing should be hated by him. He should be an upright man. He should carry out what he has promised and should be on his guard against any want of straightforwardness in his speech. Even in cases where such may be morally allowable, it is dangerous; and if once discovered, destroys people's confidence in him. His people wish to see in their priest a man on whom they can build in all confidence as on granite rock.

The priest must also be thoroughly genuine *in what he does as a priest.* No priest is likely to be guilty of deliberate falsehood, but faults may be committed through superficiality or hair-splitting. Scripture, for instance, may be used in a sense which is not contained in it. Sermons may paint the lights and shadows of life in a one-sided, exaggerated way. Injustice is done to friend and foe alike through rash judgement. What is only theological opinion may be given out as divine dogmatic truth. Accounts of miracles and of revelations, the genuineness of which is far from proved, are too easily made use of. All this is done of course with the best of intentions, namely, that of extending the kingdom of truth, but it is not allowable to distort truth in order to spread it.

This lack of truthfulness is more *noticeable in controversy.* Not infrequently a phrase is taken from a book or a discourse, a different meaning from the intended meaning is given to it, and out of it is forged a poisoned weapon. Or the mistake of a member of a party is attributed to the whole of the party. Or, again, because of a word thrown out in the course of an address, the whole tendency of a man comes under suspicion.

In this way inexact and untrue pictures were drawn of, for example, certain labour and women's movements. But such conduct is injurious: it is easy for the other side to expose such caricatures and to make a laughing stock of those who defend Christianity as frivolous persons, or to bring them into disrepute as liars. It is in controversy that St. Paul's words "Sobrius esto" [32] are especially applicable. No man should pass judgement on an opponent until he has exactly informed himself of his opponent's meaning. "Does he *really* hold what is objected against him?" is a question which should often be put to oneself before engaging in controversy.

In no case is the truth sometimes more carelessly treated than when it is a case of *someone on one's own side with whom one disagrees*. It is often sufficient for some other person to report something unfavourable about the discourse, the sermons, and doings of a fellow-priest, or to attribute errors and the like to him, and judgement is passed at once. Instead of investigating whether this or that expression was really used, instead of considering that it is possible the accuser may have misunderstood what was said, or may have fallen a victim to his imagination, or through jealousy or a desire of attracting notice may have distorted the facts, we too often enter the lists at once, glad at having found an opportunity of attacking one who has been too prominent or whom we have disliked.

It is even worse when it is a question of *tendencies*. It is not even necessary to go so far as to give oneself heart and soul to the opposing party in order to lose one's character. If a man so much as dares, apart from

[32] 2 Tim. 4: 5.

all party passion, to weigh both sides of a question in the scales of truth and justice, and to decide in favour of the right, he is put under a ban. Such an one is thought no longer to have the right spirit, he is a "danger to the Church" and must be made harmless and publicly exposed. For this purpose he is watched and enquiries are made. The hunt for "suspicious symptoms" is in full cry; the suspected man's public utterances are followed, his writings studied, what others say about his opinions listened to—and all this with feverish eagerness. The eyes are closed to everything that speaks for him, and, of course, soon we have what we want: the heretic is discovered! the portrait is finished. That it is a *caricature* we either *do not or will not see*. The supposed enemy must be brought to the ground, and for that everything is allowable.

In just the same way did the Pharisees act towards Christ. Because He did not favour their party, He must be a noxious religious person. They alone possessed the true religious spirit: they alone were the holy ones of the land. And as this Nazarene dared to attack them, it was clear He must have Beelzebub for His father. It was only a question of proving it. They began to observe Him, and, of course, they soon found what they wanted. The new Messias despised the legal purifications, He desecrated the Sabbath, He was even given to mixing with publicans and sinners—proofs sufficient that He was possessed by the evil spirit.

They behaved in the same way towards St. Paul. He had turned his back on the Pharisaic group; and that was sufficient to brand him as a child of the devil. All means that would harm him were thought good—calumny, violence, and informations laid against him to

the civil authorities. It was all one to his enemies. The question whether they were acting rightly, did not even occur to them, these saintly men!—so convinced were they of their right and of the lawfulness of their means.

Religious fanaticism has at all times caused much harm. Often, indeed, like Saul, it has fought against a Messias whom it suspected to be an enemy of God. Such conduct swerves far from the truth. It stands in direct contradiction to *all scholarly methods*. Severe demands are made on historical criticism and experimental research to-day. Exact observations are made and the sources are examined thoroughly as to their trustworthiness. All sources of error, such as party spirit, the personal influences, tendencies, and prejudices of the author are taken into careful account. And, yet, in the case we are considering, these rules are dispensed with; *any* saying is believed; out of a *single sentence* a whole story is concocted. Opponents are credited with things which exist only in the imagination. Those who act thus are like timid people out alone at night; in every harmless tree-stump they see a robber with pointed gun, in every shadow a ghost. It is because their mind is fixed on robbers and ghosts, that they see such fearsome things, and not because they are really there. We would gladly grant them their pleasure, did it but remain without consequences. But that so many blameless men should be brought into discredit, that so many should thereby have their hearts broken and their lives embittered, that is the shameful part of such conduct. And the saddest of all is that all this happens under the cloak of religion! It will fare hard with the despoilers of honour when they stand at the Judgement seat where an account must be given of every idle word.

The rage of the Pharisees against Christ and Paul, arising from religious zeal and fed on sham religious motives, should at least make us think twice, and should move us thoroughly to examine our grounds before we begin a dispute based on a religious question.

Religion is, in the first place, the handmaiden of eternal truth. Truth, all-round truth, should therefore be the priest's endeavour. "Having your loins girt about with truth." The priest who follows the truth only, feels also her blessing. "The truth shall make you free." [33] He goes through life a free man: he looks not to the right or to the left, no false motives hem him in, no earthly passions hinder him, his foot is free from all that entangles the man caught in the toil of error.

c) "Having on the breastplate of justice."

Justice, that is, in the *widest* meaning of the word, an all-round *blamelessness*. For the priest this is a coat of mail from which all attacks rebound. The stainlessness of the priest eventually overthrows all machinations of his adversaries. It assures for him in spite of all attacks an honourable memory with friend and foe. No affliction can break him, because his conscience is right. This protection gives him joyous courage to step boldly into the arena. But if the priest is secretly leading an unpriestly life, the fear of being found out and exposed by his enemies, will seize upon and paralyze his power of fighting.

Justice in the *narrower sense* means *"to give everyone his due."* That priest offends against justice who gives the preference to one class before another, who per-

[33] John 8:32.

haps reproves harshly the sins of a woman of the people or of a working man, but treats the same sins of a lady or of an educated man very mildly; who passes an unfavourable judgement without having proper proofs, or without taking into account extenuating circumstances. Much injustice too can find its way into talk about brother priests, those under us, or our superiors.

Furthermore, the priest *who oversteps his powers* commits a fault against justice. Some think that because they have care of souls, they have the right to do *anything and everything*. Arrangements made by others, even by fellow-priests, are forcibly set aside because they do not like them; orders and prohibitions are issued at will, without questioning whether there is justification for so doing; their official position is used to force their *own* views on others, even where there is no question of anything religious. And woe to that man or woman who ventures even mildly to contradict them! The cry is raised of want of respect for authority, or opposition to the clergy. But often enough it is not a question of either of these. People do not want to withdraw themselves from authority, but to keep it within its proper sphere, and they are right. Every authority must keep within its own limits: if it does not do so, it cannot complain if people refuse their obedience to it. Nothing is more calculated to undermine authority than to stretch it too far, or to use it in matters with which it has nothing to do. Nothing is more calculated to foster the charge of priestly domination than this. Times have changed, men have become more thoughtful, more self-reliant than formerly. It is not true to say that they set aside all authority as a matter of course, but they try to test and regulate the

relation of authority to freedom more from the point of view of justice than was done formerly. This is a fact which, as things are, we cannot afford to neglect. But unfortunately there are those who are too much given to laying down the law. Hence contradictions and unwillingness naturally arise against them, and also the consequent complaint, on their part, of lack of a proper Catholic spirit. In these matters we should carefully distinguish whether the priest is opposed in his *official rights* or only in his arbitrary *personal* measures. We ourselves reject anything in the way of encroachments, and must not be surprised if others reject them also. The present time is one in which the boundaries drawn between different bodies and classes are being examined on all hands. There is no need to be put out at that. What we have to do is to fix our boundaries in a fair-minded way.

Above all, we should take great care that justice rules in our relations with our fellow-workers in the world and the cloister. Everyone has equally with you the right to work, to realize plans, to develop himself. We should give, then, to everyone that measure of freedom of movement—often indeed already little enough—which is still left him. To let *each have what is his,* is true justice.

d) "Your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace."

The champion of Christianity was to go forward shod, for to go about unshod was the way of slaves. But the priest as messenger of God's Gospel is a royal herald. He must be shod, because the unshod man fears every stone on the way, every thorn, every scor-

pion and serpent. He feels himself hampered at every step.

To be unshod, means to suffer from sensitiveness, ambition, envy, human respect, over-delicacy, and love of comfort. The smallest thorns of blame, the least serpent's hiss of evil report and criticism, the smallest stones of ill-success frighten the sensitive man from treading the paths that promise much.

But it is not so with the genuine apostle. Armed with humility and courage, he goes straight ahead. Flattery does not turn his head, blame does not frighten him, nor does he know that phrase, "What will people say?" To God alone he looks, and purely human motives he treads under foot. Even on basilisks and serpents he puts his foot boldly and they will not harm him.

e) *"In all things taking the armour of faith."*

Many fiery arrows shower down on the champion of Christ from all sides: hell never leaves him at rest. At one time the shafts of lying and calumny, at another those of hatred and enmity are let loose against him and his cause. He is tortured by doubts, anxiety, depression, anger, disappointment, and other interior trials of various kinds, which cause anguish to soul and body. But the soldier of the Lord seizes the "shield of faith," and the "fiery darts" rebound extinguished.

Suspicions and calumnies cause him pain, but the man of God comforts himself with Christ's words: "Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice' sake." [34] Thoughts of revenge present themselves; the words "love your enemies" [35] thrust them away. The

[34] Matt. 5:10. [35] *Ib.* v. 44.

temptation to give up because of his failings seems likely to take hold of him, and the thought "The Lord is . . . my refuge . . . and protector" [36] prevents him from faltering. The law in his members opposing the spirit afflicts him, and "My grace is sufficient for thee" sets him up again. The onset of many enemies of the Church, the increasing corruption of morals tend to rob him of all courage, and Christ's words "Fear not, little flock, for it hath pleased your father to give you a kingdom" [37] put spirit into him once again.

And similarly in public life, in the pulpit, in the confraternities, in the press, he has a defence ready to hand. Whenever a new form of error appears, he takes up against it the Scriptures, the Councils, and the pronouncements of the Holy See, and its edge is blunted by the shield of faith against which so many forms of error in the course of the world's history have beaten in vain.

f) *"And take unto you the helmet of salvation."*

The helmet of God's fighter, the *"hope of salvation,"* [38] guards his spirit against all disturbing and discouraging thoughts, it directs all his undertakings, it keeps the zeal for battle always alive, and continually awakens new enthusiasm and joy, and carries others also along with it.

g) Finally, the Apostle recommends prayer as the most important of all weapons: "By *all prayer and supplication, praying* at all times in the spirit; and in the same watching with all instance and supplication for all the saints." [39]

[36] Ps. 17:3. [37] Luke 12:32. [38] 1 Thess. 5:8. [39] Eph. 6:18.

To prayer is success promised, and without much prayer all endeavours are in vain. Without much prayer the priest is himself endangered. The good spirit slackens, passions win the upper hand—God's fighter stumbles—and falls. "For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood; but . . . . against the *spirits of wickedness in the high places.*" [40] We cannot hope for victory without much prayer.

* * *

Truth, justice, faith, hope, courage, and a spirit of prayer—these are, then, the various pieces of the armour of God. Armed with these weapons, St. Paul stepped forth boldly against the superior power of the enemy. Relying on them, he fought decisively for the purity of the Lord's teaching. "For though an angel from heaven preach a gospel to you besides that which we have preached to you, let him be anathema." [41] With bold hand he tore the mask from the face of anti-Christian hypocrisy. "O full of all guile, and of all deceit, child of the devil, enemy of all justice . . . . behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee." [42] He stepped in boldly against all annoyances in the newly founded community of Corinth. "I have judged . . . . to deliver such a one to satan for the destruction of the flesh." [43] He inexorably demanded his rights even from the authorities. "They have beaten us publicly, uncondemned, men that are Romans, and have cast us into prison: and now do they thrust us out privately." [44] He was truly a real soldier of Christ. Because his arms were not "carnal," but "mighty to God," he was not afraid of the result, for they were fitted

[40] Eph. 6:12. [42] Acts 13:10. [44] Acts 16:37.
[41] Gal. 1:8. [43] 1 Cor. 5:3-5.

"unto the pulling down of fortifications, destroying counsels, and every height that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every understanding unto the obedience of Christ." [45]

[45] 2 Cor. 10:4, 5.

CHAPTER VIII

"In the House of God"

"THESE things I write to thee, hoping that I shall come to thee shortly. But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know *how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God."* [1]

The priest is placed in the house of God, and nominated its protector and administrator. He is called to be a "minister of the Church," and accordingly needs to be instructed *"how to behave in the house of God."* This embraces the priest's behaviour to the Church herself, to her bishops, her ministers and the faithful.

I

1. As a "minister of the Church" the priest should first be filled with a *holy pride*. If even the "Senatus populusque Romanus," the consciousness of belonging to the old Roman Empire, made the eyes of every Roman light up, it should be much more so with a Catholic priest, over whose head waves the banner of the Holy Roman Church! For what is the old Rome compared with the new? The Roman Catholic Church, spread over the world, is the highest, the most honoured religious power in the whole world. All look up to her full of envy and admiration. She is the invincible

[1] 1 Tim. 3: 14, 15.

among all rivals. That is a sign that she is the "Church of the living God"; of "God," because she alone is God's Church; of the "living God," that is, of Him who watches over and protects her in an actually palpable way. It is she who practically alone has maintained the true divine faith and the true moral law in spite of all errors; it is she alone who still continues to do so. She is practically the only one who announces and brings to the world in its full purity the "great mystery of godliness, which was manifested in the flesh, was justified in the spirit, appeared unto angels, hath been preached unto the Gentiles, is believed in the world, is taken up in glory." [2] All this should swell the priest's breast with holy enthusiasm. Certainly there have been and still are faults in the Church; but the marvels of the Church far outweigh them. The faults are nothing else than, as it were, the moss and the few dilapidated and broken stones which are on the lofty cathedral; but because of them, we do not forget the real beauty of the building. Short-sighted nd foolish, then, is the conduct of those grumblers and embittered pessimists who can talk only of the defects in God's house.

Not so we! Indeed, others would be happy did they but possess the advantages of our Church. At the bottom of this blame and grumbling there often enough lies no really blameworthy cause; but it is merely the excellence of the Church which gives rise to the grumbling, for the world loves to blacken that which is bright. Children and servants of the Church should not allow themselves to be influenced by such criticisms. We should have more self-assurance and character.

[2] *Ib.* 3:16.

2. But our enthusiasm should ripen into *deeds*.

The servant of the Church should *love* his Church; he should love her as "Christ also loved the Church," [3] and as the apostles and saints loved her. Christ did not waste His love on a useless thing.

And *how* did Christ love the Church? "He delivered himself up for it: that he might sanctify it, cleansing it by the laver of water in the word of life: that he might present it to himself, a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." [4] So also should the priest love the Church. After God, she should be his only love, his whole love. Therefore he should live entirely for her. He should be indefatigable in his activity in the confessional and in the pulpit, to remove every "spot or wrinkle" from her, to perfect her still more "that he might present to himself a glorious church."

For this cause he should be indefatigable in purifying and sanctifying himself, and, as far as in his power lies, the entire priesthood. He should make Christ's words his own: "And for them do I sanctify myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth." [5] He should take note also of those other words: "Be thou an *example* of the faithful in word, in conversation, in charity, in faith, in chastity. Till I come, attend unto reading, to exhortation, and to doctrine. Neglect not the grace that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with imposition of the hands of the priesthood. *Meditate upon these things, be wholly in these things: that thy profiting may be manifest to all.* Take heed to thyself and to doctrine: be earnest in them.

[3] Eph. 5:25. [4] *Ib.* vv. 25-27. [5] John 17:19.

For in doing this *thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee.*" [6]

3. The priest should therefore practise "thinking with the Church" (sentire cum Ecclesia). What she approves, he should approve; what she rejects, he should reject; what she recommends, should be recommended by him. It would be a sad thing if some among the clergy should come to "think against the Church" rather than with the Church. That would do more harm to the faithful than all the fury of her enemies. Priests who lacked the ecclesiastical spirit have done much more harm than opponents from without. Their action is like the destructive work of the wood-worm, which destroys the tree slowly and secretly, but none the less surely. It is a serious responsibility about which some priests should think. The happenings in Galatia on which the Apostle touches in his epistle are instructive in this connection. There may be things that are not right, but there is no need for the servant of the Church to expose and spread abroad just these things. That is to play the part of Cham. If a thing is black, we should not, and cannot call it white, and we need not, and should not whitewash what is wrong; but there is no need to make it public, as so often happens, and by sharp criticism and dissatisfied murmurings to rob good lay people of their joy in their faith and of their spirit of loyalty. Here are applicable those words: "A little leaven corrupteth the whole lump," [7] and those others: "He that troubleth you, shall bear judgement, whosoever he be." [8] And one

[6] 1 Tim. 4: 12-16. [7] Gal. 5: 9. [8] *Ib.* v. 10.

would often wish: "I would they were even cut off, who trouble you." [9]

4. The zeal for Christ's Church demands effort and sacrifice. But Christ Himself did not shun these. "Christ loved the church and *delivered himself up* for it," [10] and His example had a stirring effect on St. Paul, who said: "I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up those things which *are wanting of the sufferings of Christ,* in my flesh, for *his body,* which is *the church:* whereof I am made a *minister* according to the dispensation of God, which is given me towards you, that I may fulfil the word of God." [11] It was the example of Christ which stirred the other great preachers of the word and which was the cause of the sacrifices made by such men as St. Francis of Assisi, St. Dominic, St. Athanasius, St. John Chrysostom, St. Francis Xavier, not to speak of the later heroes of the Faith in pagan lands, and the zealous pastors of souls in the European world! It can be said of them all that "they delivered themselves up for it." This spirit of sacrifice for the Church should be the general spirit of the clergy to-day.

II

1. The Church is guided by her *bishops.* The second point, then, is: "We beseech you, brethren, to know them who labour among you, and *are over you in the Lord,* and admonish you: that you esteem them *more abundantly in charity,* for their work's sake. *Have peace with them.*" [12]

[9] Gal. 5:12.
[10] Eph. 5:25.
[11] Col. 1:24.
[12] 1 Thess. 5:12, 13.

"That you esteem them."—The priest should acknowledge his superiors; acknowledging them in deed by obeying them humbly, even when they have to admonish him. He should do more than simply obey them: he should "esteem them *more abundantly in charity.*" He should *"have peace with them."* This injunction is important. He is to do all this "because *they are over you* in the Lord," and *"for their work's sake."* He should esteem them for their work's sake because it is their official duty to direct and to admonish; it is, moreover, such a difficult office; it is such an important work, the maintaining the purity of the Faith, the salvation of souls. Everyone should help on such a work. In a good army everyone, from the general down to the last camp-follower, obeys like one man the orders of the commander-in-chief. It can happen that authority, for once, oversteps its powers, or that the arrangements it makes are not good. In such cases there remains for us the appeal "a prælato male informato ad prælatum melius informatum." But independent action neither pleases God, nor brings down blessing. Consider Saul and Jonas in their disobedience. Consider also Joseph and Azarias who are mentioned in the first book of the Machabees as having, of their own accord, undertaken an expedition in order to make a name for themselves. The former pair fell into misfortune by themselves, while the latter drove God's people also into destruction. "But they were not of the seed of those men by whom salvation was brought to Israel." [13]

2. In this respect St. Paul is at one and the same time a warning and a shining example to us. He had

[13] 1 Mach. 5: 62.

just been converted and had been a Christian but three days, when he began at once to undertake apostolic work in Damascus. It fared badly with him: instead of being converted, the Jews rewarded him with attempts at murder. Paul had to flee.—His fault had been that of so many young, yet immature men, who after they themselves have been suddenly enlightened and won for great things, think they have only to open their mouths in order to win others over to their thoughts and ideas, and who, with the best of intentions, but without understanding and reference to others, set themselves energetically to their self-imposed tasks. They overlook this one fact which is absolutely necessary for the success of the work; namely, that God must first have ploughed the field in order that our grain of seed shall find entrance: that we also can promise ourselves fruit from that field alone *to which God has called us.*

This occurrence in Damascus served the young convert as a warning. He gave up preaching for the time being, and disappeared for years into Arabia, there in solitude to be utterly changed and to fill himself with Christian ideas. He returned filled with the spirit of God, and an enlightened man. He did not begin at once again of his own accord to preach Christ, but betook himself to Antioch, and there mingled with the other prophets without coming forward in any way. "Now there were in the church which was at Antioch, prophets and doctors, among whom was Barnabas, and Simon who was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manahen, who was the foster brother of Herod the tetrarch, and *Saul.*" [14] Paul was simply one among

[14] Acts 13: 1.

the others: "And last of all a certain Saul." He waited for guidance from on high. He did not have to wait long, "And as they were ministering to the Lord, and fasting, the Holy Ghost said to them: Separate me Saul and Barnabas, for the work whereunto I have taken them. Then they, fasting and praying, and imposing their hands upon them, sent them away." [15]

Not until God had manifested His will, and by the imposition of the hands of the Church Paul had received the necessary commission for his special work, did the Apostle begin again to be greatly active.

In the course of his travels, too, it was always his first endeavour to find out God's intentions in regard to his work. With success he wandered through Cyprus, betook himself then to Pisidia, Iconium, and Lystra: but when he arrived in Phrygia and Galatia with Silas, we find suddenly: "*they were forbidden by the Holy Ghost* to preach the word in Asia," and again, "when they were come into Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia: *and the spirit of Jesus suffered them not.*" [16] This was at once a striking and distressing warning. It was in that very district that Paul had hoped for a rich harvest, and yet it was there that he had to give up his work. He did so, but in return God gave him another and far better field of labour. "And when they had passed through Mysia they went down to Troas. And a vision was showed to Paul in the night, which was a man of Macedonia standing and beseeching him, and saying: Pass over into Macedonia, and help us." [17]

Christianity was to find its way to Europe, and so to Philippi Paul went. The clear conviction of occupying

[15] *Ib.* v. 2. [16] *Ib.* 16: 6, 7. [17] *Ib.* vv. 8, 9.

exactly that place which God had determined for him, raised his courage. "And as soon as he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go into Macedonia, being assured that God had called us to preach the gospel to them." [18] And Paul was richly rewarded in Philippi for his obedience in giving up Asia; for he could greet the inhabitants of this town as "my joy and my crown." [19] The whole event tells us much. We often imagine that holiness alone is necessary to convert the whole world; but we see here that even the saints can promise themselves success only when they can say with St. Paul: "For a great door and evident is open unto me." [20] That is consoling and instructive for us.

St. Paul's work was incomparably more fruitful than that of those other teachers, of whom he said: "Having an appearance indeed of godliness, but denying the power thereof. Now these avoid. For of these sort are they who creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, who are led away with divers desires: ever learning, and never attaining to the knowledge of the truth. Now as Jannes and Mambres resisted Moses, so these also resist the truth, men corrupted in mind, reprobate concerning the faith." [21] Today also there are to be found in places the like hotheaded, pushing, and crooked men who are "lovers of themselves, haughty, proud," [22] who, never satisfied with the decisions of the Church, always know better, "ever learning, and never attaining to the knowledge of the truth"; who, in consequence, think that they alone are men of enlightenment, "having an appearance indeed of godliness, but denying the power thereof," that is, denying the power of humility and obedience;

[18] Acts 16:10. [20] 1 Cor. 16:9. [22] 2 Tim. 3:2.
[19] Philip. 4:1. [21] 2 Tim. 3:5-8.

men, also, who know how to enslave others and to win a following; "who creep into houses and lead captive silly women." [23] In addition they are full of unrest, always after something new, and eventually found "reprobate concerning the faith." [24]—*Now these avoid!* [25] "embracing that faithful word which is according to doctrine, that he may be able to exhort in sound doctrine and to convince the gainsayers." [26]

III

1. Of no less importance than the priest's proper attitude towards the Church and his superiors, is that towards his clerical *brethren.* Even the ordinary faithful receive a stern warning in this matter from the Apostle: "If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of charity, if any society of the spirit, if any bowels of commiseration: fulfil ye my joy, *that you be of one mind, having the same charity,* being of one accord, agreeing in sentiment. Let nothing be done through *contention:* neither by *vain glory.* But in humility, *let each esteem others better than themselves:* each one not *considering the things that are his own,* but those that are *other men's.*" [27] Even more to the point for the priest are those words to the Ephesians: "I therefore a prisoner in the Lord, beseech you that you walk worthy of the vocation in which you are called: *With all humility and mildness, with patience, supporting one another in charity.* Careful to keep *the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.* One body and one Spirit: as you are called *in one hope of your calling.* One Lord, one faith, one baptism. One God

[23] *Ib.* v. 6. [24] *Ib.* v. 8. [25] *Ib.* v. 5. [26] Tit. 1:9. [27] Philip. 2:1-4.

and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in us all." [28] The entire Catholic priesthood is *"one body"* by the very power of its office and the position apart which it occupies in the world. But this one body must be animated by *one spirit*. The whole episcopate throughout the world should be of one spirit with the Holy Father; all pastors of souls in a diocese should be one with their bishop; all the faithful of his parish should be one with their pastor. "One body, one spirit." If this were the case, the Church would present the wonderful picture of a true commonwealth of God.

Reasons for this unity are not lacking. *"One Lord."*—We all serve one Lord, and a certain spirit of fellowship animates all the servants of the same master. Even the old-time soldiers of fortune of a particular company held faithfully together. *"One faith."*—Outside in the world there is such a confusion of views; but we clerics throughout the entire world are all united in the one creed. *"One baptism."*—All of us are purified, cleansed, full of grace, with the light in our souls, and that amidst so many dark, night-like forms. To the one Baptism is added the one priesthood, the one priestly consecration, the same ineffaceable priestly character, the same priestly lot, the same priestly aim, the same priestly sacrifice—*"as you are called in the one hope of your calling."* As every caravan of travellers who are making for the same goal keeps faithfully together, so should we who have one and the same aim in life stand together with one mind.

"One God and Father of all."—God is the Father of all, and therefore of each of your brother-priests. He loves each one as a child, and you can have no

[28] Eph. 4: 1-6.

friendship with the Father if you despise His child, a child that is perhaps dearer to the Father than you yourself are. *"Who is above all."*—That is, a Father who holds His protecting and avenging hand over all; and yet you are not afraid of harming your brother-priests. *"Through all."*—He contemplates carrying out His plans in the world by means of each one; He wants to work through each one whom He has called, and He will do so perhaps much more through others than through you. Yet you look down on others disdainfully and hinder them unjustly, thereby shutting the kingdom of God to others. *"And in us all!"*—God dwells in each one: He works in each one; He perfects each one; and yet you dare to injure one in whom God dwells. It may be that one day in heaven you will look up in admiration at those whom you now look down upon.

There is yet a special motive to spur us all on: "For we, being many, *are one bread, one body; all that partake of one bread,*" and the chalice of benediction which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? And the bread which we break, is it not the partaking of the body of the Lord?" [29]

"One bread, one body."—All the cells of a man's body, joined together into one whole, receive the one bread which he eats, and are all nourished by it. Something similar takes place every morning in our churches when one and the same bread is received by the priest, one and the same bread is distributed to the faithful in all our churches, with the result that a wonderful sacred fellowship in one body is spread throughout the world; it is effected in millions of the faithful and of priests. In each one there is the same Christ.

[29] 1 Cor. 10: 17 and 16.

Because of the spiritual soul in man, because man is God's image, all men feel themselves urged to come together in kindliness. Now if the spiritual soul provides the foundation of a higher fellowship, it is effected much more by the Eucharistic Saviour, who has taken a place in all good hearts, and that especially among the priesthood, where as a result of daily Holy Communion, He dwells—I may say—*without interruption.*

2. St. Paul is a shining example to us *how* we are to attain to this fellow-feeling with our brother-priests.

a) In the first place, the Saint *showed due consideration* to his fellow-workers, and took care that others showed the same. Very rarely in his epistles does he greet the faithful alone, but writes: "Paul *and* Silvanus *and* Timothy, grace be to you and peace." [30] "Paul an apostle . . . *and* all the brethren who are with me" [31]; "Paul *and* Timothy, a brother." [32] To him "fellow-worker" was not merely an unavoidable figure of speech, but a warmly-felt and active reality. He did not push his fellow-workers into the background, but brought them forward, placed them in a line with himself, and took care that they were given their proper place by the faithful. He made them feel that they also were of importance. The effect must have been to inspire his fellow-workers in a way that would have been impossible if they had been treated as nonentities. In the same way, all the parish clergy should be brought forward before the parish as one body to which each equally belongs.

St. Paul spoke affectionately of his fellow-workers. "All things that concern me, Tychicus, *our dearest*

[30] 1 Thess. 1:1. [31] Gal. 1:1, 2. [32] Col. 1:1.

brother and faithful minister and fellow-servant in the Lord will make known to you."[33] "Aristarchus, my fellow-prisoner, saluteth you, and Mark the cousin german of Barnabas, touching whom you have received commandments. *If he comes unto you, receive him.* And Jesus that is called Justus: who are of the circumcision. *These only are my helpers in the kingdom of God:* who have been a *comfort* to me. Epaphras saluteth you, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, *who is always solicitous for you* in prayers, that you may stand perfect and full in all the will of God. *For I bear him testimony that he hath much labour for you* and for them that are at Laodicea and them at Hierapolis."[34] "For this cause have I sent to you Timothy, who is *my dearest son and faithful in the Lord."*[35] "For I have *no man so of the same mind, who with sincere affection is solicitous* for you."[36] Or: "I have thought it necessary to send you Epaphroditus, my brother and fellow labourer, and fellow soldier, but your apostle, and he that hath ministered to my wants. For indeed *he longed after you all: and was sad,* for that you had heard that he was sick. For indeed he was sick, nigh unto death; but God had mercy on him; not only on him, but *on me also,* lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow. *Therefore I sent him the more speedily: that seeing him again, you may rejoice, and I may be without sorrow. Receive him therefore with all joy in the Lord; and treat with honour such as he is. Because for the work of Christ he came to the point of death:* delivering his life, that he might fulfil that which on your part was wanting towards my service."[37] "Now if Timothy come, *see that he be*

[33] *Ib.* 4:7. [35] 1 Cor. 4:17. [37] *Ib.* vv. 25-30.
[34] *Ib.* vv. 10-13. [36] Philip. 2:20.

with you without fear, for he worketh the work of the Lord as I also do." [38] We priests might well ask ourselves whether we speak with the same appreciation of those who are working with us in the same parish, and of other workers for God, or whether the opposite is not sometimes the case; whether, that is, aversion, envy, contempt for others find their way into our talk. Much peace and kindliness can be undermined by the words of some one evil-wisher, and men who were highly thought of, can have their influence ruined by such talk, and hence much good is hindered. "Behold how small a fire kindleth a great wood, and the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity." [39]

For it is especially the tongue, which is made red daily with Christ's Precious Blood, that gives ground for the complaint: "By it we bless God the Father: and *by it we curse men, who are made after the likeness of God.* Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be. Doth a fountain send forth, out of the same hole, sweet and bitter water?" [40]

Kindly and appreciative talk, on the contrary, fosters good wishes and kindly feeling towards all.

b) Paul's nobility of soul in his relations to his young disciple *Timothy* is a grand example to us. Even while this young man was still in the bosom of his family, Paul took a lively interest in him, noticed his dispositions, encouraged them, drew him to himself and formed him into an apostle.

He later devoted to him a great love. He accompanied him with the best wishes. "To Timothy, his

[38] 1 Cor. 16: 10. [39] Jas. 3: 5, 6. [40] *Ib.* vv. 9-11.

beloved son in faith. Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father, and from Christ Jesus our Lord." [41] He longed for him, "desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy; calling to mind that faith which is in thee unfeigned." [42]

Moreover, since he loved him so dearly, he carried him there where a man carries only that which is next to his heart—before the face of God in prayer. "I give thanks to God, whom I serve from my forefathers with a pure conscience, that without ceasing, I have a remembrance of thee in my prayers, night and day." [43] When it happens that one priest prays earnestly for another, all is well with them, for that is proof of no ordinary, but of a hearty kindliness, springing from a deeply felt interest that comes from the heart. And this kindly feeling that shows itself first in prayer, will naturally colour all their intercourse. He who earnestly prays for a blessing from God on his fellow-priest will treat him with esteem and kindliness, will not take things amiss from him, will not speak uncharitably against him, will not distress him or put obstacles in his way.

St. Paul was, moreover, full of care for his young companion. He took thought for his *health:* "Do not still drink water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake, and thy frequent infirmities." [44] But he was full of care even more so for *the good of his soul.* "For which cause I admonish thee, that thou stir up the grace of God which is in thee, by the imposition of my hands. For God hath not given us the spirit of fear: but of power, and of love, and of sobriety. Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor

[41] 1 Tim. 1:2.
[42] 2 Tim. 1:4, 5.
[43] *Ib.* v. 3.
[44] 1 Tim. 5:23.

of me his prisoner: but labour with the gospel, according to the power of God." [45] "This precept I commend to thee, O son Timothy; according to the prophecies going before on thee, that thou war in them a good warfare, having faith and a good conscience." [46] He warned him against dangers: "But flee thou youthful desires, and pursue justice, faith, charity, and peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. And avoid foolish and unlearned questions, knowing that they beget strifes." [47]

He gave him careful instructions regarding the office of preaching: "Preach the word," [48] and regarding the whole pastoral office.[49] He acted as his guide in everything, helped him as a father, and was his adviser in all matters. He had himself experienced only too well what a help it is to a young man to find a fatherly friend who understands. Paul himself had experienced it at the time, when, touched by grace and torn asunder by strife and anguish of conscience, he was able to flee to the heart of the elderly Ananias and pour out his whole misery to him.

Lastly, Paul let his helper know of his plans and sufferings, and led him on to important work. He even entrusted him with difficult missions. "And sending into Macedonia two of them that ministered to him, Timothy and Erastus, he himself remained for a time in Asia." [50] He sent him to Corinth also: "For this cause have I sent to you Timothy, who is my dearest son and faithful in the Lord; who will put you in mind of my ways, which are in Christ Jesus; as I teach everywhere and in every church." [51] Very dif-

[45] 2 Tim. 1:6-8.
[46] 1 Tim. 1:18.
[47] 2 Tim. 2:22.
[48] *Ib.* 4:2.
[49] Cf. 1 Tim. ch. 5.
[50] Acts 19:22.
[51] 1 Cor. 4:17.

ferent would have been the effect on Timothy's courage and energy, if his light had always been kept under a bushel. If only all young priests might find such solicitous fatherly friends, superiors, and helpers in their elder brethren!

But Timothy was, after all, *a man apart:* a young disciple, docile, modest, zealous, full of the right spirit, affectionate and obedient, for Paul could write of him: *"For this cause* have I sent to you Timothy, who is my dearest son and faithful in the Lord; who will put you in mind of *my ways,* which are in Christ Jesus, *as I teach everywhere in every church."* [52] For he was sure that his disciple would not follow ways of his own, but that his teaching would be in the fullest agreement with that of his master; that, in fact, he would teach "the ways of Paul."

Yet, it was not always granted even to a St. Paul to live continually at peace with everyone. A character such as his, that was active in so many directions, that tore up by the roots, that with a mighty jolt overturned time-honoured institutions and was further blessed with great success, could not but stir up great opposition. "For a great door and evident is opened unto me: *and many adversaries."* [53] First there arose friction between him and his friend Barnabas on the question of taking Mark with them. This reminds us that disagreement can arise between the holiest and most peaceable men. One could not expect it to be otherwise; for complete discernment and perfection are found united in God alone, whereas in each of us there glows only a spark of knowledge, and even that is obscured. We see different sides of one and the same problem. In

[52] *Ib.* v. 17. [53] *Ib.* 16:9

addition, we must take into consideration the difference of temperament, of education, and of interests. St. Paul was one who pushed ahead in spite of obstacles, full of energy, a man whose motto was "Either —or," or "all—or nothing." Barnabas, on the other hand, was a man of peace, soothing and conciliatory. As such, he had already shown himself active in Paul's behalf, when he obtained for him admittance to the Christian community at the time Paul was looked upon with suspicion by all. It was as a conciliator that he now came forward on Mark's behalf. But now conciliation was just the difficulty. Both, as a matter of fact, were right. As they came to no agreement, the two eventually separated peacefully, and that is often the best thing to do when too great differences of character or endeavour give rise to the fear of frequent disagreements. Worse was the manifold opposition that Paul had to endure from other quarters. At times they tried to prevent his coming forward and working; at times they cast suspicions on his teaching, or on his character; they spoke against his preaching, his personal appearance, his letters; they undermined his good name, and, in order to silence him, they did not draw back from the most hateful intrigues. The Apostle felt it, and felt it deeply. His inner soul was harrowed with pain and grief; for his was a sensitive and deep-feeling nature. His epistles show traces of these tortures of soul. Often there seems still to linger in them anger, indignation, and deep depression; often there come to the surface expressions and phrases full of overpowering force and biting sharpness; but personal hatred and revenge are far from his writings; and the most violent storm finds its end in bright evening peace of forgiveness and love: "I have planted, Apollo

watered, but God gave the increase." [54] "What then? So that by all means, whether by occasion, or by truth, Christ be preached: in this also I rejoice, yea, and will rejoice." [55]

c) We all long for peace, but peace will reign only if we follow out these words: "I beseech you that you walk . . . with all *humility and mildness, with patience, supporting one another in charity.*" [56]

"With all humility!"—Friction between man and man generally comes from want of humility. The one is too grand in his views, thinks too much of himself; while the other too easily feels hurt and put in the second place and gets indignant at every slight. If everyone, like Christ at the washing of His disciples' feet, would humble himself among his fellow-workers and would seek to serve them, fewer dissensions would occur. "And there was also a strife amongst them, which of them should seem to be the greater. And he said to them. The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them: and they that have power over them are called beneficent: *But you not so: but he that is the greater among you, let him become as the younger; and he that is the leader, as he that serveth.* For which is greater, he that sitteth at table, or he that serveth? Is not he that sitteth at table? But I am in the midst of you, as he that serveth." [57]

"And with mildness!"—Would that we all possessed that gentleness which carefully avoids every word or act that can cause strife, which deals gently with those who are easily stirred to anger, which, when insulted, does not return the insult, but is silent; which repays

[54] *Ib.* 3:6.
[55] Philip. 1:18.
[56] Eph. 4:1, 2.
[57] Luke 22:24-27.

evil not with evil, but with good: if only we possessed this gentleness, how much more peaceable life would be!

"With patience supporting one another!"—We cannot possibly demand that all men should adapt themselves to *our* views; we would repudiate it, did others demand it of us. You have to put up with things from others, but by your peculiarities you too give them something to put up with, and perhaps a good deal. We should not ask men to be other than they are, for they will not change; but we must take them as we find them. In patience we must bear with their peculiarities; we must do like the peasants, who in the morning go to market with their heavy baskets and sacks. When one of them sees another bowed down under his heavy burden, he comes up, gives a hand, and helps him to carry the basket and sack. That is what the Apostle is thinking of when he warns us: "Bear ye one another's burdens; and so you shall fulfil the law of Christ." [58]

We should be especially careful to bear with those who are not doing right.

We should admit damaging reports only with the greatest reserve. "Against a priest receive not an accusation, but under two or three witnesses." [59] In this respect we may often fail. We may gladly seize upon unfavourable reports and spread them further. Charity is not the reason, but envy and joy in the discomfiture of another. Perhaps he had been too successful, and therefore we gladly welcome every unfavourable opinion that is passed on him. Let us, however, never forget how easily rumours are set afoot

[58] Gal. 6:2. [59] 1 Tim. 5:19.

in the world, and that they are passed on still more easily. The priest, being an enlightened man and pastor of souls, should, however, like an immovable rock of truth and truthfulness withstand the streams of stupid, hateful chit-chat, and should only accept what has been proved correct by careful examination; as an educator of the people, also, he should lead all to the strictest truthfulness and charity in conversation, and not, on the contrary, abet a taste for gossip. Just as historical criticism, as I have already mentioned, takes a strict line with all reports, so are we even more bound, in our intercourse one with another, to the rules of honest investigation. Only when two or three reliable witnesses vouch for a matter, should we, according to St. Paul, take any notice of them at all. And, yet, on what grounds, and from what witnesses does many a priest receive complaints and damaging reports of his brother priests? A penitent, a pious soul has said so, and that suffices! We do not examine whether these are trustworthy witnesses; we believe only too readily, just because it is unfavourable or something spicy.

But if a fault, perhaps even a serious fault, of a brother priest is well established, a warning is often needed from his superiors. "Them that sin reprove before all: that the rest may also have fear," [60] but it must be "without prejudice," without bitterness, and *"doing nothing by declining to either side."* [61] With us human beings, especially with superiors, a certain bitterness against an offender easily creeps in. His offence, the scandal he has given, the trouble and pain he has caused them awaken displeasure. Confidence

[60] *Ib.* v. 20. [61] *Ib.* v. 21.

in him has disappeared, and there arises the inclination to interpret everything to his discredit, and not to listen to his explanations, or to put them aside at once as empty excuses. The accused is always at a disadvantage with the accusers. Important, then, is the warning: "Do nothing by declining to either side!"

Everyone who has to judge another must see to it that the pointer of his scales stands true; that antipathy, spite, anger, and prejudice have not been put on the scales against the accused from the start and already weighed them down, even before the examination began; and that in the course of the proceedings, only those weights that have been tested by pure and actual truth, find their way onto the pans of the scale, and that nature does not smuggle in purely personal considerations.

We must also be on our guard against *harshness:* "Brethren, and if a man be overtaken in any fault, you, who are spiritual, instruct such a one in the *spirit of meekness, considering thyself,* lest thou also be tempted." [62] That holds for everyone. Many a priest who has been at fault, is treated very harshly by his fellow-priests. He is shunned, and punished, proscribed, and cut by all with pharisaic contempt. The result is, that as the bank on which he could find safety and to which he stretched eager hands recedes, he sinks deeper. Only among the good could he have found firm ground under his feet, but they will have nothing to do with him; so he remains alone with his temptations and his melancholy, and in order to flee from his torturing loneliness he eventually turns entirely to the kingdom of darkness. Many such would

[62] Gal. 6:1.

have been rescued, and would have become useful apostles of Christ, if at the decisive moment he had found not merely pharisaical judges, but a good and merciful Samaritan, who would have bent over to him, and spoken words of encouragement to him; who would have poured into his wounds oil and wine, instead of biting vinegar; who would have offered him his arm, lifted him up, helped him out of his dangerous position, and led him to a safe shelter. But priest and Levite passed by: they went even into the prisons after the souls of others, but left lying helpless on the wayside the soul of their brother priest who had fallen among thieves; for him they had only contempt. Not only is this conduct unpriestly; it is dangerous, for some day the warning "lest thou also be tempted" may make itself keenly felt.

Noble, on the other hand, is the action of the priest who, when others turn away, takes up with a disgraced fellow-priest, helps him and with untiring care and patience tries to make the smoking flax burn again, to make the bruised reed whole. "Let us work good to all men, *but especially to those who are of the household of the faith.*" [63]

"In charity!"—This is the best means to priestly concord. Where charity is sown, even if it is only a few grains here and there, now by a good word, now by a friendly greeting, now by a little service or favour, the general good-will will come forth in abundance on the lands of God.

Of charity it is said, as you know: "Charity is patient, is kind: charity envieth not, dealeth not perversely; is not puffed up; is not ambitious, seeketh not

[63] *Ib.* v. 10.

her own, is not provoked to anger, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth with the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." [64] This should be our way of dealing with our brother priests.

d) The sketch of brotherly love is completed in the epistle to the Romans,[65] where it is said, *"Let love be without dissimulation."* Our charity should come from our hearts. It should not be merely smooth outward courtesy covering internal malice. What a revelation there would be, if an invisible power were to tear the mask away from some people, and let the true face be seen!

"Loving one another with the charity of the brotherhood." [66] The relation should be a fraternal one, and *"hating that which is evil, cleaving to that which is good."* Charity should not lead to a certain softness, which from false modesty keeps silent about the wrongdoing of a brother priest; nay, even perhaps approves and encourages it, and from mere cowardice supports him in his complaints about superiors, in his harsh conduct towards others, or in his unpriestly action. True charity, on the contrary, hates what is wrong in a brother priest, and will not shrink from strong measures to remove it. To keep one's friend from a less meritorious death, from severe judgement and long purgatory—this is the ardent desire of true charity. *"Cleaving to that which is good!"* Wherever it finds good actions that help on the kingdom of God, either in pastoral work, in organisation, in sermons, or in writing, charity does not permit itself destructive dis-

[64] 1 Cor. 13:4-7. [65] 12:9 ff. [66] *Ib.* v. 10.

approval or caustic criticism, but promotes and commends what is good. Such charity is not found everywhere. There are many who quickly make unfavourable criticisms their own, and few who approve of and help on the good that is done.

"Rejoice with them that rejoice; weep with them that weep." [67] It is most encouraging when a priest has a sincere part in all the gladness and pain of a brother priest; visits and consoles him in suffering, sickness, and misfortune, and—sometimes a more difficult thing—sincerely rejoices with him in his joys and success.

"Communicating to the necessities of the saints." [68] —There is no need to insist that a priest, when he is in need, should find his first support among his fellow-priests Some priests, however, find themselves like Job, who discovered harsh critics in his friends, but no helpers.

"Pursuing hospitality." [69]—Hospitality was greatly insisted upon in early Christian times and also by the Fathers of the Church. It is real, true, active Christian charity. An open presbytery, in which all who enter feel at once at home; a presbytery, which offers them a place of refuge in every pastoral worry, helps exceedingly to fellow-feeling among priests and to contentment with their state of life. It is true that abuses may creep in here; too much time may be stolen from better things; the sacred character of the meeting may be spoiled by a too free way of eating and by worldliness, and the kindness of the host may be abused by his guests. If only host and guest will put them-

[67] *Ib.* v. 15. [68] *Ib.* v. 13. [69] *Ib.* v. 13.

selves in the other's place, the right mean and the right tone will be found.

"Being of one mind towards another. Not minding high things. . . . Be not wise in your own conceits." [70] —Often a cantankerous, quarrelsome spirit upsets an otherwise peaceful meeting.

But in spite of all precautions, there will always be some friction. In that case, there is only one way to peace: *"Bless them that persecute you: bless, and curse not."* [71] *"Give place unto wrath. . . . If thy enemy be hungry, give him to eat; if he thirst, give him to drink. For, doing this, thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head. Be not overcome by evil, but overcome evil by good."* [72] These are truly golden rules, and where they are followed, the conduct of priest to priest will be a reflection of the beautiful scene described by the Apostle: "All these were persevering with one mind in prayer with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren." [73]

IV

After the priest's relation to the Church, to those set over him, and to his fellow-priests, there remains his relation to his *congregation.*

1. What strikes one above all in St. Paul in this respect is the penetrating *spirit of faith* in which he accosts his flock. Those committed to his care are to him "God's tillage," "God's building," [74] a "temple of God," [75] in which God's spirit dwells, "the beloved of God, called to be saints." [76]

They are to him a sacred document, in which Christ

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[70] Rom. 12:16. [72] *Ib.* vv. 19-21. [74] 1 Cor. 3:9. [76] Rom. 1:7.
[71] *Ib.* v. 14. [73] Acts 1:14. [75] *Ib.* vv. 16, 17.

continually enters His holy thoughts, feelings, and graces. "Being manifested, that you *are the epistle of Christ,* ministered by us, and written not with ink, but *with the Spirit of the living God;* not in tables of stone, but in the fleshly tables of the heart." [77] They are the predestined "unto the adoption of children through Jesus Christ . . . . unto the praise of the glory of his grace." [78]

These are sublime and profound ideas, which should give rise to a great *sense of responsibility* in everyone who has care of souls. "The tillage of God" entrusted to him, he must preserve and cultivate; "the building of God" he must industriously add to; "the temple of God" he must keep from all desecration. "But if any man violate the temple of God, him shall God destroy. For the temple of God is holy." [79] They are the "epistle of Christ," for every soul is an everlasting memorial of the workings of Christian grace, and hence a priest must see to it that he makes himself a "fit pen for God to use in writing," in order that no letter shall be wrongly written through his fault; that no gap shall find place in the sublime epistle of God; and that no blot shall mar it anywhere. He must take great pains to give himself wholeheartedly to the inspiration of the Spirit and to carry out its promptings. The people are the beloved of God"—His people should be treated with the greatest respect. "Predestined unto the praise of the glory of his grace"—his work among them should be such that the greatness of God may shine forth in them more and more.

2. From this sublime conception there should result

[77] 2 Cor. 3:3. [78] Eph. 1:5, 6. [79] 1 Cor. 3:17.

a complete *devotion of the priest to his people.* The apostle of the Lord no longer belongs to himself, but entirely to souls. "To the Greeks and to the barbarians, to the wise and to the unwise, I am a debtor." [80] *"A debtor."* To the members of his parish the pastor is a debtor, not a creditor. He is a debtor ex officio, a debtor to all, even to the smallest child, to the poorest beggar, and to the most degenerate sinner of the parish. A debtor, because he is the apostle of the gospel of love; and charity acknowledges a debt when all other claims of right and obligation fail. To them are due all that he possesses by virtue of his priestly office and character; learning and example, work and deed, time and talent; for they are Christ's children given over to him by Christ, and his priestly gifts are merely their proper heritage left to *them* by Christ: "For all things are yours, whether it be Paul, or Apollo, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; for all are yours; and you are Christ's; and Christ is God's." [81]

But his care for his Christian community was to St. Paul not only a duty, it was also *a thing that lay near to his heart.* His faithful had become "most dear" to him [82] for he had begotten them through the Gospel of Jesus Christ.[83] Therefore they were his "little children," [84] his crown and his joy.[85] Therefore he bestowed all his love on them "for that I have you in my heart." [86] With him this was no empty expression, for from every line of his epistles it is clear how he cared for them all, for Corinthians and Ephesians; for Philippians and Galatians; for the Romans and Hebrews: it

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[80] Rom. 1:14.
[81] 1 Cor. 3:22, 23.
[82] 1 Thess. 2:8.
[83] 1 Cor. 4:15.
[84] Gal. 4:19.
[85] Philip. 4:1.
[86] *Ib.* 1:7.

is clear how he had the one wish for them all: "That your charity may more and more abound in knowledge, and in all understanding: that you may approve the better things, that you may be sincere and without offence unto the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of justice, through Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God." [87] Therefore he prayed for them: "Grace be to you and peace. We give thanks to God always for you all; making a remembrance of you in our prayers without ceasing." [88] Therefore, full of joy, he thought of their zeal: "Being mindful of the work of your faith, and labour, and charity, and of the enduring of the hope of our Lord Jesus Christ before God and our Father." [89] And so he rejoiced at their progress: "Knowing, brethren beloved of God, your election: for our gospel hath not been unto you in word only, but in power also, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much fullness, as you know what manner of men we have been among you for your sakes. And you became followers of us, and of the Lord; receiving the word in much tribulation, with joy of the Holy Ghost: so that you were made a pattern to all that believe in Macedonia and in Achaia. For from you was spread abroad the word of the Lord, not only in Macedonia, and in Achaia, but also in every place, your faith which is towards God, is gone forth, so that we need not to speak any thing." [90] Therefore their good spirit comforted him in all his afflictions: "But now when Timothy came to us from you, and related to us your faith and charity, and that you have a good remembrance of us always, desiring to see us as we also to see you; therefore we were comforted, brethren, in you, in

[87] *Ib.* vv. 9-11.
[88] 1 Thess. 1:2.
[89] *Ib.* v. 3.
[90] *Ib.* vv. 4-8.

all our necessity and tribulation, by your faith."[91] Their success was his very life: "Because now we live, if you stand in the Lord."[92] Therefore he did not know how to thank God for it: "For what thanks can we return to God for you, in all the joy wherewith we rejoice for you before our God . . . ?"[93] When present, he laboured for them day and night; when absent, he accompanied them in spirit: "For though I be absent in body, yet in spirit I am with you; rejoicing, and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith which is in Christ."[94] However far away he might have been, he was always near to them in prayer: "Night and day more abundantly praying that we may see your face, and accomplish those things that are wanting to your faith. Now God himself and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way unto you. And may the Lord multiply you, and make you abound in charity towards one another, and towards all men: as we do also towards you, to confirm your hearts without blame, in holiness, before God and our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, with all his saints. Amen."[95]

3. It is touching to see how Paul's solicitude extended to each *individual* member of the community. Lois and Eunice,[96] Archippus and Nymphas[97] were the object of his friendly remembrance. He showed himself grateful to Onesiphorus: "The Lord give mercy to the house of Onesiphorus: because he hath often refreshed me, and hath not been ashamed of my chain: . . . . The Lord grant unto him to find mercy

[91] 1 Thess. 3:6, 7. [92] *Ib.* v. 8. [93] *Ib.* v. 9. [94] Col. 2:5. [95] 1 Thess. 3:10-13. [96] 2 Tim. 1:5. [97] Col. 4:15, 17.

of the Lord in that day," [98] and to the married couple Prisca and Aquila: "Salute Prisca and Aquila, my helpers in Christ Jesus, (who have for my life laid down their own necks: to whom not I only give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles)." [99] In a personal petition to Philemon he interceded for the runaway slave Onesimus; he commended the faithful Phebe to the protection of the community: "I commend to you Phebe, our sister, who is in the ministry of the church, that is in Cenchræ: that you receive her in the Lord as becometh saints; and that you assist her in whatsoever business she shall have need of you. For she also hath assisted many, and myself also." [100] The ending of the epistle to the Romans shows very beautifully, how his solicitude extended even to the individual: "Salute Epenetus, my beloved: who is the firstfruits of Asia in Christ. Salute Mary, who hath laboured much among you. Salute Andronicus and Junias, my kinsmen and fellow prisoners: who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me. Salute Ampliatus, most beloved to me in the Lord. Salute Urbanus, our helper in Christ Jesus, and Stachys, my beloved. Salute Apelles, approved in Christ. Salute them that are of Aristobulus' household. Salute Herodian, my kinsman. Salute them that are of Narcissus' household, who are in the Lord. Salute Tryphæna and Tryphosa, who labour in the Lord. Salute Persis, the dearly beloved, who hath much laboured in the Lord. Salute Rufus, elect in the Lord, and his mother and mine. Salute Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and the brethren that are with them. Salute Philologus and Julia, Nereus and

[98] 2 Tim. 1: 16-18. [99] Rom. 16: 3, 4. [100] *Ib.* vv. 1, 2.

his sister, and Olympias; and all the saints that are with them. Salute one another with an holy kiss. All the churches of Christ salute you." [101] Notice the characteristic adjectives the apostle uses!

At the same time, his charity was not merely an "official" charity; it had a *personal note* in it: Paul spoke to his people as friend to friend; he let them know of his needs and worries, his joys and successes, and shared his greatest secrets with them. It is no wonder, then, that at his departure from Miletus, tears were shed in abundance, and that the whole community accompanied him to the ship weeping.

4. Yet, with all his love, Paul did not lack the necessary *firmness*. Again and again he emphasized his sublime commission; again and again he appealed to the divine Majesty, which stood behind him urging and avenging. For that reason he appeared among his flock full of courage: "For yourselves know, brethren, our entrance in unto you, that it was not in vain: but having suffered many things before, and been shamefully treated (as you know) at Philippi, *we had confidence in our God,* to speak unto you the gospel of God in much carefulness. For our exhortation was not of error, nor of uncleanness, nor in deceit: but as we were approved by God that the gospel should be committed to us: even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who proveth our hearts." [102]

And, so, he was not afraid of *reproving faults sternly,* and even of taking severe measures against those who were dangerous to the community. This was shown by his behaviour towards the Corinthians and

[101] Rom. 16:5-16. [102] 1 Thess. 2:1-4.

Galatians. The same man from whose lips there usually flowed words of benediction, could suddenly break out with: "What will you? shall I come to you with a rod; or in charity, and in the spirit of meekness?" [103] And even the consternation of the community at his reproof did not disturb him, because he intended only what was best for them. "For although I made you sorrowful by my epistle, I do not repent; and if I did repent, seeing that the same epistle (although but for a time) did make you sorrowful; now I am glad: not because you were made sorrowful; but because you were made sorrowful unto penance. For you were made sorrowful according to God, that you might suffer damage by us in nothing." [104]

Frequently he impressed on his *fellow-workers* the duty of fighting against abuses, error, and vice: "For this cause I left thee in Crete, that thou *shouldst set in order* the things that are wanting." [105] *"But be thou vigilant."* [106] "As I desired thee to remain at Ephesus when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some not to teach otherwise." [107] "For there are also many disobedient, vain talkers, and seducers: especially they who are of the circumcision: *who must be reproved."* [108] Further, where there was question, as there was in the case of the Cretians, of thick-witted cynics, who could not be approached by milder measures—"The Cretians are always liars, evil beasts, slothful bellies" [109]—he rose even to saying: *"Rebuke them sharply,* that they may be sound in the faith." [110]

Yet, he always knew how to season his reproof with kindness. How tactfully he wrote to the Philippians:

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[103] 1 Cor. 4:21.
[104] 2 Cor. 7:8, 9.
[105] Tit. 1:5.
[106] 2 Tim. 4:5.
[107] 1 Tim. 1:3.
[108] Tit. 1:10, 11.
[109] *Ib.* v. 12.
[110] *Ib.* v. 13.

"Now I rejoice in the Lord exceedingly, that now at length your thought for me hath flourished again, as you did also think; *but you were busied.*" [111] How kindly he wrote to the Corinthians: "But I determined this with myself, not to come to you again in sorrow. For if I make you sorrowful, who is he then that can make me glad, but the same who is made sorrowful by me? And I wrote this same to you; that I may not, when I come, have sorrow upon sorrow, from them of whom I ought to rejoice: having confidence in you all, that my joy is the joy of you all. For out of much affliction and anguish of heart, I wrote to you with many tears: not that you should be made sorrowful: but that you might know the charity that I have more abundantly towards you." [112] See how he called for moderation in reproof, and for the reception of the contrite back once more: "To him who is such a one, this rebuke is sufficient, which is given by many: so that on the contrary, you should rather forgive him and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow." [113]

A harsh rebuke wounds and repels wrong-doers and hardens them in their wickedness, and in the end drives them into extremes; but where, as in St. Paul, there is always evidence of a heart full of kindness and thoughtfulness, the sting of the correction is taken away, and even though the fault is not given up at once, the kindly intention behind the correction is seen and understood. Even the most obstinate cannot refuse their admiration to an earnest, but kind priest who is zealous in his work, no matter how uncomfortable he makes them. On the contrary, they may perhaps praise

[111] 4: 10. [112] 2 Cor. 2: 1-4. [113] *Ib.* vv. 6, 7.

a negligent priest who is forgetful of his duty, as knowing the world, and tolerant, but at the bottom of their hearts they will not recognise in him a truly priestly character.

5. It is of great importance for effective work in the parish, then, that the priest should make his own those words: "For whereas I was free as to all, I made myself the servant of all, that I might gain the more. And I became to the Jews, a Jew, that I might gain the Jews: to them that are under the law, as if I were under the law, ... that I might gain them that were under the law. To them that were without the law, as if I were without the law . . . . that I might gain them that were without the law. To the weak I became weak, that I might gain the weak. *I became all things to all men, that I might save all.*" [114]

There are golden hints also in the exhortation: "An ancient man rebuke not, but entreat him as a father: young men, as brethren: old women, as mothers: young women, as sisters, in all chastity: honour widows that are widows indeed." [115]

6. To all this should be joined that one thing without which all labour is in vain; namely, *perfect sincerity of character.* "For never did we practise words of flattery, as ye know, nor hidden covetousness, God is witness, nor sought we glory from men, neither from you nor from others, whereas we might have claimed honour as missionaries of Christ: but *we became babes* in the midst of you: *yearning over you, like a nurse cherishing her children.*" [116] The priest, then, should

[114] 1 Cor. 9: 19-22. [115] 1 Tim. 5: 1-3 [116] 1 Thess. 2: 5, 7, W. V.

take to himself those words: "In all things show thyself an example of good works, in doctrine, in integrity, in gravity, the sound word that cannot be blamed: that *he, who is on the contrary part, may be afraid, having no evil to say of us.*" [117] Troops look up to their leader, children to their father; if the pastor of souls has, first of all, made his own the full Christian life, people will gladly obey his words, and all will seek to reform themselves after his example. Then, like a heavenly star, he will shine in the midst of a perverse generation, and will lead to heaven those who were committed to him. "For it is God who worketh in you, both to will and to accomplish, according to his good will. And do ye all things without murmurings and hesitations; that you may be blameless, and sincere children of God, without reproof, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation; among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life." [118]

[117] Tit. 2:7, 8.

[118] Philip. 2:13-16.

CHAPTER IX

"More Abundantly Zealous"

UNDER good "behaviour in the house of God," we must include, and by no means in the last place, *"zeal for the house of God."* Every priest should be able to say of himself: "The zeal of thy house hath eaten me up."[1]

Yet, there is perhaps no power that needs so much restraint and guidance as *religious zeal;* because, although everything great in God's kingdom is due to a rightly directed zeal, it is equally true that misguided zeal has brought about the saddest results. For, the greater part of opposition to the Church, and all religious errors, such as, the fanaticism of the Sectarians, the self-inflicted mutilations of the Indian fakirs, the Moloch sacrifices of the Phœnicians, the human sacrifices of the African witch-doctors, can all be traced back to religious zeal. And the history of Montanism, of Jansenism, of the burning of witches, and of the pilgrimages of the Flagellants, teaches us that even the faithful in the Church are not always proof against aberrations of zeal. St. Paul was full of zeal, full of consuming zeal, but even he in his zeal paid tribute to human blindness. How different was his zeal before that eventful hour at Damascus, and how different afterwards. Before, it was a destructive zeal; afterwards, an enkindling zeal: before, it was like a volcanic

[1] Ps. 68: 10.

fire; afterwards, like a fire on the hearth: at first he was, as he himself confessed, the *"more abundantly zealous for the traditions of my fathers;"* [2] afterwards he confessed: *"I am jealous of you with the jealousy of God."* [3] The two expressions are fitting designations for false and true zeal.

A

I

Paul "more abundantly zealous for the traditions of my fathers," is an example of false zeal.

1. False zeal is a zeal *without discernment.* "But Paul made havoc of *the Church.*" [4]

This is a striking picture! The kingdom of God had been so long expected, so ardently desired, and had been wished for with such longing even by the disciple of Gamaliel, and when it did come, it was devastated by him; and all this was done from what was meant to be zeal for God, from zeal directed, as he thought, by God!

This sad delusion has often been repeated. Very many persecutions of the Church are a new edition of Saul's zeal. For they arise sometimes not so much from wickedness and conscious hardness of heart, as from the self-deception of having to defend God's cause, and thereby to advance it, as Christ Himself said: "Whosoever killeth you, will think that he doth a service to God." [5]

Here is sufficient reason to mistrust our own zeal; not, however, where it is a question of the *Church*

[2] Gal. 1:14.
[3] 2 Cor. 11:2.
[4] Acts 8:3.
[5] John 16:2.

herself, for then we know we possess the pillar of truth; but where there is question of matters left free by the authorities of the Church, or of what are not ecclesiastical institutions, but such as deal with social, charitable, or parish affairs, or have purely political or economic aims, or are such as are called for by the needs of the time. Such are often attacked and forcibly destroyed by the blind zeal of the narrow-minded, as Saul tried to destroy the Church; and from their ruins God might call out to them as He did to Saul: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?"

2. Then, again, false zeal is a zeal *without charity.* "Saul as yet breathing out threatenings." [6]

False zeal is a persecuting zeal. It does not want to save, but to destroy; not to win the erring one to God, but to punish him, to be avenged on him, to let him feel one's own bitterness, to vent one's own anger and displeasure on him, perhaps to satisfy personal spite, or to "pay him out" for some humiliation or injury of which he has been the cause. Secret and injured self-love is behind it all, not love of souls. This is the source of the characteristics of this zeal, which shows itself in bitterness, harshness, anger, and violence; it is truly the "bitter zeal," of which St. James speaks.[7]

False zeal is a zeal *without measure. "Beyond measure* I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it." [8] How boundless, to be sure, was Saul's frenzy! The mature Gamaliel wisely advised him to wait quietly, to abstain from all persecution, and to let God and time judge the new movement. "For if this council or this work be of men, it will come to nought: but if

[6] Acts 9:1. [7] 3:14. [8] Gal. 1:13.

it be of God, you cannot overthrow it, lest perhaps you be found even to fight against God." [9] Those words were spoken with understanding and enlightenment. Many agreed with the old doctor of the law. But it was just this that worked up his young disciple. It seemed to him that even the chief leaders in his own camp had lost their insight; that they no longer had the right spirit; that by their laziness they were becoming a danger to God's cause; that something ought to be done. The young zealot boiled and raged. "Why," he must have asked himself, "should the persecution be put off as the older men wanted?" They should agitate, organize, stir up the people, get the authorities to move. He succeeded, and Stephen was stoned to death. The young Saul saw it, and breathed freely. But that did not satisfy him. He wished all to be treated like Stephen. The work of persecution went on much too slowly for the young Pharisee. Like a ravenous wolf, he hurried with his like-minded companions from house to house: no one found mercy at his hands, neither men nor women; neither old nor young; he dragged them all out and gave them over to the magistrates. "But Saul made havoc of the Church, entering in from house to house, and dragging away men and women, committed them to prison." [10]

But even that was not enough. *"Saul, as yet breathing out threatenings."* [11] According to his mind, not only in Jerusalem, but throughout the whole world the Christian Church must be stamped out in blood. Hearing that there were followers of Jesus in Damascus, he went to the authorities of the Synagogue, and ob-

[9] Acts 5:38. [10] *Ib.* 8:3. [11] *Ib.* 9:1.

tained full powers to take prisoner all whom he might find, men and women, and, further, to "bring them bound to Jerusalem." [12]

Zeal that loves violent measures and is eager to destroy is a zeal to be suspected. There is a great contrast between the confused and thoughtless behaviour of the youthful Saul who loved force in proportion to his want of understanding, and the dignified, thoughtful, and enlightened conduct of the wise Gamaliel. The youthful zealot knew better than the far-seeing old man. No wonder that Paul later was often ashamed of his youthful folly and reproached himself with it in his letters. At that time, however, he was a real Pharisee, intractable to all warnings and advice. God himself had, first of all, to throw him down from his high charger, and forcibly to open his eyes for him—only then did he come to his senses.

Saul and Gamaliel are a lesson to us.

II

Saul thought his zeal came from God. *Where did it really come from?*

1. *The root cause was an undisciplined temperament.* Saul was essentially a man of quick and dry feeling. Such men are capable of high enthusiasm, of deep inner sympathy, of strong, far-reaching resolution, of unswerving perseverance, and of an energy violent in its impetuosity.

All these are fine qualities when they are controlled by a right aim, but become a great power for evil when driven into the service of error. Unfortunately

[12] *Ib.* v. 2.

this is too often the case. The desire for activity longs for a field that will be productive of great things; too often impetuosity will not give a chance to sober all-around considerations. The flame of enthusiasm which flares up too quickly, rushes along to fresh deeds in spite of all opposing considerations. The undue excitement of mind runs away with the understanding; the inflexibility of the will knows no turning back; and the impetuous force knows no restraint. Too often there is added to all this a hidden ambition which seeks sensational tasks in order to get a great name and to play a prominent part in the world. Hence, there follows the neglect of little daily duties, "in order to cultivate more fruitful plots"; hence, also, the sudden disappearance of zeal for the cause if there are no more laurels to be gathered; hence, even going over to the enemies' camp as soon as this promises more glory and power. So the blessing changes to a curse. Paul was no stranger to some of these mistakes, and perhaps there are zealous men to-day who are not innocent of them.

2. To his temperament was added *a one-sided blind love for the traditional.* "More abundantly zealous *for the traditions of my fathers.*"

Like all Pharisees, Saul was convinced that his school alone was in possession of the truth, and that all who opposed it were to be turned away without further ado. Christianity was something new, not in harmony with the teaching of the Pharisees. This was sufficient reason to fight it to the death. We are so made that opinions that have become ours in childhood, have grown up with us in our parents' house, in our family and environment, have been put before us

by our teachers, and have been maintained and defended by us perhaps for many years, are so dear to us that any new idea that is in opposition to them is, without further ado, put aside by us as dangerous and false.

But even in this case, it is not so much true zeal for the truth, that is the motive cause, as rather a blind love for what one already has. When his new ascetical teaching was attacked, Christ once very strikingly remarked: "No man drinking old [wine], has presently a mind to new: for he saith, The old is better." [13] We have grown into years with the old teaching, with certain theological opinions, with certain religious customs, social institutions, with certain ways of carrying out the cure of souls—they have grown to be part of us, and we love and value them: we are used to the old wine, and so the new does not suit our taste. Or perhaps we have succumbed to a certain conservativism which comes with years. We do not take to or adapt ourselves to other ideas. To take up with what is new is burdensome to us. In some cases, we see the danger of losing the position of leader if new ideas are taken up, and so we refuse to have anything to do with them. In other cases, the spirit of contradiction plays its part. We may have been innovators in our own time, but we cannot tolerate that others should be such.

This obstinate conservatism has, however, bad effects. It kept Saul and the Pharisees as a class outside the Church of Christ. It is the same appeal to the "traditions of our fathers" that to-day blocks the way to Christianity among both savage and civilized peoples. It was their obstinate clinging to old-fash-

[13] Luke 5: 39.

ioned exegetical, ethical, ascetical, and social views that in times past brought a lasting humiliating defeat upon certain parties in the Church.

The behaviour of the Jews at that time seems ridiculous to us to-day. Wherever Paul set foot, they wove conspiracies, made an outcry, and behaved as if they were possessed, deluding themselves with the idea that they were defending the cause of God. It should give us cause for thought to reflect that with the Jews it was just the priest and Scribes, as to-day among the Turks, Indians, Chinese, and Negroes, who by appealing to the "traditions of our fathers" placed themselves in opposition to Christianity and to all the progress wished for by God.

We must of course carefully distinguish between tradition and tradition. The words "Keep that which is committed to thy trust" [14] are the Magna Charta of our Church; but we must make a distinction between what really belongs to deposit of faith, and what is a view we are free to hold, or an opinion held by some theological school or a purely human institution. We must be especially careful in our opposition when it is a question of novelties in matters which do not touch religion. Mankind has not been coffined up by God in a pyramid, like a mummy, but has been placed in a fruitful soil as a living tree. God wants to see a development, and not a standing still on a point reached once and for all.

The thirteenth century is most instructive in this respect. That was a time when theology was placed on an entirely new basis by the introduction of Aristotelian philosophy. The opponents of the new movement

[14] 1 Tim. 6:20.

maintained that the writings of the Fathers were sufficient for all needs and that a new method was superfluous. A whole company of monks and priests opened an assault on the new "pagan" philosophy; even St. Thomas Aquinas was suspected of heresy and was censured by several princes of the Church. Men like Gerhoh, Canon of Augsburg, later on Provost of the collegiate church of Reichersberg, spoke, wrote, went from place to place in fury, and used all their influence at Rome to have the new movement suppressed.[15] Yet, to-day, Scholasticism stands as the Church's philosophy, and its most ardent defender, St. Thomas Aquinas, as the prince of ecclesiastical learning.

3. *False party spirit* was the last ground of Saul's false zeal. *"I am a Pharisee, the son of Pharisees."* [16] He was contaminated, nay, entirely saturated with the pharisaical spirit.—*Self-conceit* is the first mark of this spirit. They alone, the Pharisees, were the real sons of Abraham, they alone possessed pure doctrine, they alone real piety; all others were publicans and sinners.

Self-conceit engenders exclusiveness and intolerance. No other tendency was tolerated. Although Pharisaism was neither prescribed by God, nor marked out by the Chair of Moses as the one way of salvation for all, everyone who did not follow its colours was outlawed.

From this there resulted a great *narrowness, an ignorant spirit, and injustice.* Christ appeared, but His teaching differed from theirs. That was sufficient reason for the Pharisees to do away with Him. Instead of listening to what He had to say, and examining His

[15] Cf. Dr. Albert Hauck, *Kirchengeschichte Deutschlands*, Pt. 4, pp. 449, 457 f; and F. Ehrle. *Ztschr. f. k. Theol.*, Innsbruck, 1913, p. 266f.

[16] Acts 23·6.

claim to be heard, they did not listen at all in the beginning. "From out of Galilee nothing good can come" was quite decisive with them. But when the success of the movement did compel them to consider it, they did so in a spirit of contradiction and hate. Christ was not of their party; indeed He was opposed to it, and therefore was a danger to the community; they could not get beyond that. Certainly there was nothing in His words or actions that spoke against His sincerity. Still, some such thing had to be found, and so it was. Led on by their party hatred, they were able to find matters for all manner of suspicion in His words and actions. Often, it is true, they had to do violence to them in order to interpret them in their own sense, but what did that matter? It was all for the sacred cause: pious excuses easily did away with all scruples. So blind party spirit successfully brought about that Truth was nailed to the Cross, and deceit triumphed. Would, at any rate, that the pharisaic spirit had been buried once and for all with Saul at the gates of Damascus! But we see it boldly lifting up its head in many of our present-day controversies. It is enough to attach oneself to a party, to be proscribed, suspected, and even calumniated. And all this is done in the interest of God's cause. The experience of Saul should make all zealots most cautious.

There is one circumstance, which the Acts of the Apostles mentions, which calls for special note in the attack made by the Pharisees. "But the Jews stirred up *religious* and honourable *women,* and the *chief men* of the city, and raised a persecution against Paul and Barnabas." [17]

[17] Acts 13: 50.

Pious women were stirred up, and won over to the movement. After that, it prospered famously; because when a woman gives herself to a cause, she does so with passion. But was it for God's honour, and the good of the world? Under right direction, a woman has often become a powerful influence for the furthering of God's kingdom; but when she has been taken into the pay of powers of falsehood, she has become almost equally a curse, as the history of Paul, of the Montanists, of the Albigenses, of the Jansenists, and numerous other false doctrines teach us.

"Religious and honourable women!" That was where the seduction lay. They were pious; how, then, could they be mistaken? "They are holy women. How they pray! What sacrifices they make! It is even reported that they have been favoured with mystical experiences! How could they be mistaken?" But still they were wrong, and so were the nuns of Port-Royal and others. Even with men, people often refer to their piety as an infallible sign of the correctness of their views. "He is a holy man, and so is right." Or one says of oneself: "I am always strengthened in my view during prayer, and so it must be the right one." But it is false to think that a more fervent piety ensures one against error; that every confirmation in prayer is an infallible sign that one is on the right way, that it is an exhortation from God to continue on the same path.

After all, theology teaches that sanctity and infallibility can exist quite separate one from the other and often enough have so existed; that even prophets, though they were free from error in giving out the message of God, were sometimes quite wrong in those opinions of their own which so easily attached them-

selves to the message. We may call to mind, too, that a man so spiritual and so united with God as St. Peter Canisius, strongly held the irrational opinions of his time as to witches; and that a Saint like St. Bernard was woefully mistaken as to the success of the Crusades.

God gives a deep insight to the saints in striving after their own *personal perfection,* and also in their mission if He uses them as prophets; but insight *into all things* has never been promised them.

"But the more I pray, the more I feel myself right, and in duty bound to go forward in my course." Yet, even that is no proof of certainty. Even here auto-suggestion and self-deception can easily appear to be God's voice. Saul and the Pharisees prayed much, and as a result their *blind zeal* blazed up the more. Luther, Jacob Böhme, Swedenborg and zealots generally have appealed to the voice of God made known to them in prayer. Encouragement experienced in prayer may be then very deceptive. While much that is true and good has come from prayer, most of the false tendencies among Christians in mysticism, etc., are owing to it. St. Ignatius then writes to the point when he bids us remember that in prayer three kinds of thoughts can creep into the soul: such as come from God, such as come from one's own self, and such as come from the evil spirit.

Many false prophets of Israel, by reason of their dreams and visions, came forward as God's messengers; but what did God say? "The prophets prophesy falsely in my name. I sent them not, neither have I commanded them: nor have I spoken to them: They prophesy unto you a lying vision . . . and deceit and

the seduction of *their own heart.*" [18] Therefore "Behold I am against the prophets, saith the Lord: who *use their tongues and say: The Lord saith it.*" [19]

III

False zeal brings evil *consequences* in its trail.

It strikes a person *blind:* "Thou *blind* Pharisee." [20] Saul's opposition and that of the Pharisees was so blind! They thought it their duty to cure the blindness of others, and did not see that it was they who were blind. They thought they had discovered an erring mind in others; and they themselves were suffering from it. "Thou blind Pharisee, first make clean *the inside* of the cup." [21]

And, yet, they thought that they deserved a special reward from God. But Christ warned them: "Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up." [22]

No men seemed to those of old more really "a planting from God" than the Pharisees. They were most zealous, they apparently made religion live, they practised strict asceticism, and they watched with jealousy over the law; and yet, according to Christ, they were "a plant which *my heavenly Father hath not planted.*"

If self-deception was possible in their case, we all have need to be on our guard. It is often purely natural activity, and wrongly directed piety that impel us to do what God has neither willed nor approved. It is a mistake to think: "After all, I am undertaking a good work, and so it is willed by God." The Pharisees also thought so; but what happened later, shows how wrong

[18] Jer. 14:14. [19] *Ib.* 23:30, 31. [20] Matt. 23:26. [21] *Ib.* [22] *Ib.* 15:13.

they were. It is, then, most important clearly to distinguish the impulse of nature from that of God. The character of the work is often known by its fruits.

To-day, also, there may be those who plume themselves on their zeal, to whom God applies the words: "If you have bitter zeal, . . . glory not, and be not liars against the truth. For this is not wisdom, descending from above: but *earthly, sensual, devilish.*" [23] It is *earthly,* because it is really seeking only earthly things; it is *sensual,* because it arises from blind instinct; it is *devilish,* because often it is stirred up by the evil spirit in order to carry out his evil designs. How apposite, then, in regard to zeal is the exhortation: "See therefore, brethren, how you walk circumspectly: not as unwise, but as wise . . . understanding *what is the will of God.*" [24]

B

It was the lightning stroke of grace that had hurled the young Pharisee to the ground before the gates of Damascus: it was a different man who rose from the dust. The fundamental element of his character—his driving energy—remained, but henceforth it was purified and purged by grace. In place of being "more abundantly zealous for the traditions of my fathers," we hear, "I am jealous of you with the jealousy of God." With the jealousy of God, means working zealously *for God and in God's spirit.*

I

Zealous for God alone!

It was as if scales had fallen from Paul's eyes. Much

[23] Jas. 3: 14, 15. [24] Eph. 5: 15-17.

that had made a noise, he had considered the effect of pure zeal; whereas, it was only a cloak for the indulgence of self or the outcome of party spirit. Now it was different: "But the things that were gain to me, the same I have counted loss for Christ. Furthermore, I count all things to be but loss for the excellent knowledge of Jesus Christ my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but as dung, that I may gain Christ." [25]

Christ alone was his life now; and his one aim was expressed in the words: "Now to the king of ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honour and glory for ever and ever." [26] His great object was to seek God alone in everything; his continual endeavour to recognize "What is the good, and the acceptable, and the perfect will of God." [27] And so he remained quietly in retirement until God called him forth; and similarly on his travels was he ever attentive to the manifestations of the Spirit of God. Gloriously, too, did he come through the great trials that distinguish true from false zeal; namely contradictions, ignominy, and persecution.

Because Paul sought only the furtherance of the cause of God, it was all one to him by whom that cause was furthered, whether by himself, or by others. And so he welcomed every fellow-worker, even those he liked least, with joy. That he was made much or little of, praised, or blamed left him cold. Again, no work was too laborious for him: "But in all things let us exhibit ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in tribulation, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in prisons, in seditions, in labours, in watchings,

[25] Philip. 3:7, 8. [26] 1 Tim. 1:17. [27] Rom. 12:2.

in fastings, in chastity, in knowledge, in long-suffering, in sweetness, in the Holy Ghost, in charity unfeigned, in the word of truth, in the power of God; by the armour of justice on the right hand and on the left; by honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report; as deceivers, and yet true; as unknown, and yet known; as dying, and behold we live; as chastised, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as needy, yet enriching many; as having nothing, and possessing all things." [28] And, so, no sacrifice was too great for him: "Even unto this hour we both hunger and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no fixed abode; and we labour, working with our own hands: we are reviled, and we bless; we are persecuted, and we suffer it. We are blasphemed, and we entreat; we are made the refuse of this world, the offscouring of all even until now." [29] For this reason he rejoiced even in his sufferings and imprisonment, knowing "that the things which have happened to me, have fallen out rather to the furtherance of the gospel: so that my bands are made manifest in Christ, in all the court, and in all other places: and many of the brethren in the Lord, growing confident by my bands, are much more bold to speak the word of God without fear." [30] Because his heart was set only on the cause of God, its progress was his consolation in all his afflictions: "At my first answer no man stood with me, but all forsook me: may it not be laid to their charge. But the Lord stood by me, and strengthened me, *that by me the preaching may be accomplished, and that all the Gentiles may hear.*" [31] Of a truth, in the mouth of *him* who by his deeds proved the reality of such sentiments, were the words

[28] 2 Cor. 6: 4-10.
[29] 1 Cor. 4: 11-13.
[30] Philip. 1: 12-14.
[31] 2 Tim. 4: 16, 17.

"I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as dung, that I may gain Christ," [32] no mere verbiage, but the sober truth.

II

Zealous for God, and therefore zealous *like God!*

1. God's zeal proceeds from *love*. He does not come to destroy, but to save. God is to His own both mother and father at the same time. It was the same with St. Paul. His faithful were to him his children. "For if you have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet not many fathers. For in Christ Jesus, by the gospel, *I have begotten you.*" [33] And so, like a mother, he bore them about with him with all their interests and necessities: "For that I have you in my heart." [34]

He knew no other wish than that of their continual progress: "For God is my witness, *how I long after you all* in the bowels of Jesus Christ. And *this I pray,* that your charity may more and more *abound in knowledge, and in all understanding:* that you may approve the better things, that you may be *sincere and without offence unto the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of justice unto the glory and praise of God.*" [35] He laboured for them with such pains that he not only carried them on his heart as a mother does her child, but bore them, as it were, in the womb, in order to guard, to train, and to form them for Christ: "My little children, of whom I am in labour again, until Christ be formed in you." [36] Hence arose his ceaseless endeavours: "My daily instance, the solicitude for all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is

[32] Philip. 3:8. [34] Philip. 1:7. [36] Gal. 4:19.
[33] 1 Cor. 4:15. [35] *Ib.* vv. 8-11.

scandalized, and I am not on fire?" [37] For this reason he adapted himself to all: "To the weak I became weak, that I might gain the weak. I became all things to all men, that I might save all." [38] Great was his unselfishness: "As I also in all things please all men, not seeking that which is profitable to myself, but to many, that they may be saved." [39] How inexhaustible his perseverance was! "Behold now the third time I am ready to come to you; and I will not be burthensome unto you. For I seek not the things that are yours, but you. For neither ought the children to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children. But I most gladly will spend and be spent myself for your souls; although loving you more, I be loved less." [40] From his love arose such unremitting activity, that at his departure from Miletus he could say: "You know from the first day that I came into Asia, in what manner I have been with you, for all the time, serving the Lord with all humility, and with tears, and temptations which befell me by the conspiracies of the Jews; how I have kept back nothing that was profitable to you, but have preached it to you, and taught you publicly, and from house to house, testifying both to Jews and Gentiles penance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ." [41] And so he could call the Thessalonians to witness: "For you remember, brethren, our labour and toil: working night and day, lest we should be chargeable to any of you, we preached among you the gospel of God. You are witnesses, and God also, how holily, and justly, and without blame, we have been to you that have believed: as you know in what manner, *entreating and comforting you, (as a father doth his children,) we testified to*

[37] 2 Cor. 11:28, 29. [38] 1 Cor. 9:22. [39] *Ib.* 10:33. [40] 2 Cor. 12:14, 15. [41] Acts 20:18-21.

every one of you, that you would walk worthy of God, who hath called us unto his kingdom and glory. Therefore we also give thanks to God without ceasing: because, that when you had received of us the word of the hearing of God, you received it not as the word of men, but (as it is indeed) the word of God, who worketh in you that have believed." [42] From the same source arose that genuine mother-like spirit of sacrifice which for its own is ready to sacrifice not merely time and trouble, but even to give up life itself: "Like a nurse cherishing her children, we were minded to share with you, not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives—so dear to us had ye become." [43] Hence, in spite of being drawn to heaven in desire, he longed to remain on earth for the sake of his people: "But I am straitened between two: having a desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ, a thing by far the better. But to abide still in the flesh, is needful for you." [44] Hence too even the wish: "I speak the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost: that I have great sadness, and continual sorrow in my heart. For I wished myself to be an anathema from Christ, for my brethren, who are my kinsmen according to the flesh." [45]

Could the love for the souls entrusted to him be more tender and more deep, or the zeal for their good more aflame?

2. Because Paul's zeal was born of God, it had the other marks of zeal that is from God, those which are so strikingly described by the Apostle St. James in the words: "But if you have bitter zeal, and there be con-

[42] 1 Thess. 2: 9-13.
[43] *Ib.* vv. 7, 8, W. V.
[44] Philip. 1: 23, 24.
[45] Rom. 9: 1-3.

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tentions in your hearts; glory not, and be not liars against the truth. For this is not wisdom, descending from above: but earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envy and contention is, there is inconstancy and every evil work. *But the wisdom, that is from above, first indeed is chaste, then peaceable, modest, easy to be persuaded, consenting to the good, full of mercy and good fruits, without judging, without dissimulation.* And the fruit of justice is sown in peace, to them that make peace." [46]

"Chaste!" True zeal is chaste, modest, retiring. False zeal is like the coquette who shows off her charms everywhere; true zeal is like the modest girl who appears in the world only with hesitation and veiled, but nevertheless wins all rightly thinking people to herself. The former was the zeal of the Pharisees and is still the zeal of the sects, a zeal which recommends its goods with puffing advertisement; the latter was the zeal of the first Christians, and is still that of the Church, which celebrates her mysteries in quiet places and endeavours to win the world more by the quiet example of her virtues than by means which forcibly attract attention.

"Peaceable!" True zeal certainly does not recoil before a contest. St. Paul did not do so—but quarrelsomeness, wrangling about words, theological and partisan wrangling is contrary to it. It seizes the sword only when compelled to do so. "If it be possible, as much as is in you, have peace with all men." [47] This is its solution. "Contend not in words, for it is to no profit, but to the subverting of hearers." [48] This is its lodestar. Those of our opponents whose chief tactics

[46] 3: 14-18. [47] Rom. 12: 18. [48] 2 Tim. 2: 14.

are to stir up hatred and strife, only repel us. The theological bouts and polemics of the Reformation period were of little avail. In our day we know the small results that have come from polemical pamphlets and newspaper controversy. Even though controversy may be necessary now and again, quiet constructive work is, on the whole, the best defence against all attacks. Quarrel begets quarrel; polemic, polemic; hatred, hatred; and bitterness, bitterness. We want to save the Faith, but make a loss of charity. "For it is to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers." It is not the heroes delighting in strife who have been of most use to the Church, but the gentle apostles and courageous but peace-loving confessors. We have a striking example in the great Apostle of Germany, St. Peter Canisius, who knew well how to join together resolute defence of God's cause, and love of peace. He came out and rightly against the "Reformers," but with equal firmness he came out against excessive zeal, and the use of violence against them. "Brethren, even if a man be taken in some offence, do ye who are spiritual set such a one right *in a spirit of gentleness* looking to thyself, lest thou in thy turn be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so shall ye fulfil the law of Christ." [49]

Certainly it is our duty to stand up to and answer our opponents but we are also told: "A man that is a heretic, after the first and second admonition, avoid: knowing that he that is such an one is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned by his own judgement." [50]

"Modest!" False zeal is arrogant, self-conceited, and claims to know better than others; whereas, true

[49] Gal. 6:1, 2, W. V. [50] Tit. 3:10, 11.

zeal is modest. Arrogant was the zeal of young Saul; modest that of Paul who had been touched by grace. In Jerusalem he had pushed himself forward; in Antioch he mixed modestly among the other prophets, and waited until the Holy Spirit entrusted him with a higher mission. Nor did he think other than modestly of his *endeavours* in his new office. "And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not in loftiness of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of Christ. For I judged not myself to know anything among you, but Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not in the persuasive words of human wisdom, but in showing of the Spirit and power; that your faith might not stand on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God." [51] His thoughts *of himself* were humble. "Last of all, he was seen also by me, as by one born out of due time. For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God, I am what I am; and his grace in me hath not been void, but I have laboured more abundantly than all they: yet not I, but the grace of God with me." [52] He made little claim on people: "I have not coveted any man's silver, gold, or apparel, as you yourselves know: for such things as were needful for me and them that are with me, these hands have furnished." [53] He was diffident when giving advice! "But more blessed shall she be, if she so remain according to my counsel: *and I think that I also have the spirit of God!*" [54] He humbly sought en-

[51] 1 Cor. 2:1-5.
[52] *Ib.* 15:8-10.
[53] Acts 20:33, 34.
[54] 1 Cor. 7:40.

lightenment and instruction from the other apostles, and willingly submitted to their decisions in spite of his long years of active teaching: "Then, after fourteen years, I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus also with me. And I went up according to revelation; and communicated to them the gospel, which I preach among the Gentiles, but apart to them who seemed to be something: lest perhaps I should run, or had run in vain." [55]

But with all his modesty, he remained firm. Where it was a question of Christ's cause, he knew no false concessions; and when he considered it necessary, he demanded an account even from St. Peter: "But when Cephas was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed." [56]

That zeal should be modest, is of particular importance to many who are walking new ways; for if elderly people sometimes fail through too great caution, young people are at fault through too great self-reliance and progressiveness. They not only know everything, but they know it all better. They take up with everything new, whatever quarter it may come from. They are particularly inclined to allow themselves to be dazzled by the achievements and efforts of those who are outside the fold. Their wares are splendid, ours inferior; moreover, all that has been done up to now, is nothing in their eyes. It is they, so they imagine, who at last see the right way to do things. As a consequence, their judgements on things as they are, are most disparaging.

Still, not everything that is old, is to be rejected simply because it is old; nor is everything new to be

[55] Gal. 2:1, 2. [56] *Ib.* v. 11.

hailed because it is new. New streams rush foaming along, but gradually they return to the old channel. And, so, there have been young priests who thought it was their mission radically to alter pastoral methods, but, taught by experience have, as parish priests, quietly gone back to the old long-tried ways.

We should treat old traditions with something of that reverence which we give to cathedrals grey with age, but the present day knows no reverence. Christ was to bring new wine in new bottles, but even so He treated with respect what was old. His work was different from that of John the Baptist, but He made the passing over gentle. He did not begin His work by pushing the older man, His forerunner, roughly aside; He did not belittle his work in the eyes of His disciples, but affectionately made His first visit to him, allowed Himself to be baptised by him, and thereby showed recognition of his work, and was never tired of praising John's works and virtues before all the people.

St. John, on the other hand, did not regard the younger Prophet *with jealous eyes;* he did not *suspect in Him a rival;* he did not think of gathering together his followers against Him who was supplanting him in his office, or of setting the authorities on the watch for Him. On the contrary, he greeted Him as the Messias, the latchet of whose shoes he was not worthy to loose. He regarded himself merely as preparing the way for the newcomer. Now that his mission was fulfilled, he gave it up gladly. He said: "He must increase, but I must decrease." [57] And far from saving his following for himself, he led all his disciples to the Saviour, "Behold the Lamb of God." [58]

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[57] John 3:30. [58] *Ib.* 1:29.

Christ and St. John, St. Paul and the Synagogue, the new and the old teach us a very important lesson.

"Easy to be persuaded!"—False zeal seeks to compel by force; true zeal, to win by gentle persuasion and reason. The former wants to convert the whole world suddenly; but the latter allows time for the working of grace. The one is inflexible; while the other adapts itself to persons and circumstances. To a certain extent Elias' zeal was at first somewhat raw. His words echoed through the land with crushing power. He slew without pity the prophets of Baal; and with great severity he pilloried the royal pair. His conduct was bold, but neither quite wise nor prudent. The result of it was, that the corruption increased the more; the hatred which was aroused, only grew more violent; Elias had to flee, and, broken in spirit, he sank into gloomy melancholy. Then God taught him something better. A powerful storm arose, tearing mountains and smashing rocks, but the Lord was not in the storm; an earthquake came, so that everything tottered, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; there came a hot fire, which burned brightly and consumed everything, but the Lord was not in the fire. Lastly, there came a rustling wind: it was in this that God was hidden.[59]

The storm was Elias' wild impetuosity, which violently tore down all hindrances; the earthquake was his thundering power; the fire, his brightly flaring destructive anger. God was not in all this, but in the gentle breath of wind. God is not in inactivity, but in a steady but gentle movement, that ever patiently persuades, encourages, consoles, and warns. God is in

[59] 3 Kings 19: 1ff.

the gentle air that bears the seeds from blossom to blossom, that gently fans, and gently drives harmful vapours away, an air that refreshes and strengthens, but does not overwhelm.

In the beginning, the man of Tarsus was affected with the zeal of Elias. Saul was for bands and fetters, but Paul could confess that he had worked "in much patience" [60] "exhorting and encouraging." [61] For he had learnt to see that it is to no purpose to wish to anticipate the wisdom of God; that grace has its own laws and times: "It is vain for you to rise before light." "Unless the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it." [62]

"Consenting to the good!"—False zeal hinders the good by narrow-mindedness, envy, prejudice, and pharisaical desires of power; true zeal, on the contrary, accepts the good wherever it finds it and regardless of who does it. False zeal pays attention to *that good alone* which is done by itself, and in its own province; whereas true zeal is interested in everything *in the whole world* that concerns God. All good schemes can reckon on its co-operation and help everywhere and at all times. St. Paul was a model in this. If it was possible to journey to his faithful, he journeyed thither himself; if he had to remain away from them, he sent his disciples. If these were not at hand, he enkindled the faithful by his epistles. If no opportunity for this offered, he stretched out his hands in prayer over all Asia, everywhere fructifying the good seed, always consenting to the good.

False zeal looks ever at the *dark side of things*. Blame, grumbling, and complaining are always its

[60] 2 Cor. 6:4. [61] 1 Thess. 2:11, W. V. [62] Ps. 126:2, 1.

weapons, and ennui its final phase. True zeal, on the contrary, looks always at the bright side, and bestows praise and encouragement: the seed grows luxuriantly and the truly zealous man rejoices.

Elias, again, was a picture of the former. "All have fallen away, I alone remain!" Hence came his listlessness, slackness, and inactivity. He had looked on the gloomy side of things. God showed him that there were still seven thousand in Israel who had not bent the knee before Baal.

Paul, on the other hand, always looked on *the bright side of things: "I give thanks to my God* always for you, for the grace of God that is given you in Christ Jesus."[63] "First I give thanks to my God, through Jesus Christ, for you all, *because your faith is spoken of in the whole world."*[64] "Grace be to you and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. We give thanks to God, and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you. *Hearing your faith* in Christ Jesus, and *the love* which you have towards all the saints."[65] "Therefore, my dearly beloved brethren, and most desired, *my joy and my crown;* so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved."[66]

There was much evil in Corinth, and many shortcomings in the other cities, and yet Paul rejoiced. As a result, he had more success than Elias. Depression and continual fault-finding are of no use, and rob us and the faithful of all gladness. It is foolish to be continually harping in doleful strains on the wickedness of the world, for it will only awaken in the faithful a conviction that Christianity is powerless. A faint-

[63] 1 Cor. 1:4.
[64] Rom. 1:8.
[65] Col. 1:3, 4.
[66] Philip. 4:1.

hearted leader makes the whole band faint-hearted. Reproofs are senseless which give rise to the feeling, "I am hopeless," or "If all is lost, why begin again?" It is just those who are struggling hard, those who often stumble, that need courage and the insistence on the possibility of becoming better; they also require the good which is still in them to be recognised and strengthened. Only thus will the energy for good be awakened once more and the higher self in a man gradually control the lower. Zeal should be consenting to the good in this sense also, that it separates from the ashes the spark that still glimmers in the soul of a sinner, and gently fans it into flame.

Where action is modelled on the Apostle's words: "Let all your things be done in *charity*." [67] "Being rooted and founded in *charity*" [68]; "I, therefore, a prisoner in the Lord, beseech you that you walk worthy of the vocation in which you are called, with all humility and mildness, with patience, supporting one another in charity. Careful to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace," [69] the consenting to the good, will follow of its own accord, for "Charity is . . . kind: dealeth not perversely; . . . thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, *but rejoiceth with the truth*." [70]

Where there is no charity, where ill-will guides the enquiry, where envy or the thought "So and so is becoming too powerful, he must be crushed," where jealousy and the desire to find something against a person creep in—in such cases the most blameless of men is not safe from suspicions, and the attack knows neither moderation nor gentleness.—"He rejoiceth in iniquity!" The truth is, we are glad to have found

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[67] 1 Cor. 16:14.
[68] Eph. 3:17.
[69] *Ib.* 4:1-3.
[70] 1 Cor. 13:4.

something disgraceful so as to be able to deal our opponent a serious blow.

So far does this seeking for "suspicion symptoms" go, that if nothing really objectionable is found, the argument from silence is seized upon. "On such and such an occasion, so and so ought to have emphasized his Catholic point of view more distinctly; he should have raised a more energetic protest against such and such a thing: he did not do so, therefore he is not a thorough Catholic."

In this manner the way is paved for all manner of arbitrary suspicions to which anyone might be exposed and so come into discredit.

Such a method is the very opposite of that of the serious seeker after truth. Every student of history and criticism knows that the argument from silence can be used only with the greatest caution. The silence of a witness about any given matter does not come into consideration unless the said person had the *possibility and duty* of speaking in that particular case. But has *everyone on every occasion* the duty of bringing forward his Catholic point of view, or of meeting all and sundry attacks against the Faith? Does not Moral Theology tell us the contrary? Do not such zealots fall into the same mistake as the Pharisees of old did, of whom Our Saviour said: "For they bind heavy and insupportable burdens, and lay them on men's shoulders." [71]

"Doing the truth in charity!" is the apostle's warning. *"Above all things have charity!"* With false zealots, correctness of belief—that is, their own view—is of greater import than charity. Charity they set

[71] Matt. 23:4.

aside without a thought. Whether they accuse or calumniate or rob an irreproachable fellow-man of his honour, his position and influence; whether they sadden him and break him, is of no concern to them if only they have the satisfaction of preserving the Faith pure, as they imagine; but, in reality, it is in order to be able to vent their anger on one who is displeasing to them.

Paul in his pharisaical days had experienced in himself the blind raging of this zeal without charity. It was quite different after his conversion.

"Full of mercy!" It was in mercy that the prophet Jonas failed. At God's command he had threatened the godless city with death and destruction, and God left Niniveh in peace. Hence great indignation arose within him: "O God, is not this what I said . . . ? Therefore I went before to flee . . . : for I know that thou art a gracious and merciful God, patient and of much compassion." [72] God did not punish, although the city deserved it. *He* did not support the preacher and did not fulfil his threat.

The same feeling of annoyance steals over some priests. They have the wish that God for once would "pay out" unbelievers, the enemies of the Church, and careless sinners. But that is not Christ's spirit.

Saul, too, had been filled with annoyance and desires of revenge: but how differently he thought as Paul! He did not desire a court of vengeance for them that failed, but said: "Grace unto you, and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ." [73] And he confessed: "I speak the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost:

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[72] Jonas 4:2. [73] 2 Thess. 1:2.

that I have great sadness, and continual sorrow in my heart. For I wished myself to be an anathema from Christ, for my brethren, who are my kinsmen according to the flesh." [74] He considered his ministry, not as a ministry of punishment, but as one of reconciliation.

May it be granted to us always to remember that, especially in connection with sinners. It may be that the unscrupulous sinner has to be spoken to sometimes severely, but the majority need encouragement. Sin always tortures them sufficiently, and all should find peace and new love of life in the sacrament of reconciliation. The hearts of all expand if they find a kind confessor, and they are grateful for every comforting word. The priest should, after all, *refresh* all those who are weary and are burdened, and not lay new burdens of despair on top of the old ones. Severity may frighten, but true conversion is a fruit reserved to merciful charity.

"The fruit of justice is sown in peace." [75] The priest should sow in peace, and, helped by peace, should preserve peace in spite of all lack of success. False zeal breaks down with difficulties, as the examples of Elias and Jonas show; but Paul continued his work of conversion undaunted.

3. All these qualities came to light later in Paul's work. His zeal was so different now from formerly. Previously it had been like the raging mountain stream, rushing wildly down from the heights. It had brought with it boulders, refuse, and foaming froth; it had torn down bridges and houses, in other words, had done much injustice and been the cause of sorrow,

[74] Rom. 9 : 1-3. [75] Jas. 3 : 18.

pain, and bloodshed. But now, sustained by the love of God and the patience of Christ, it was like the stream in the plain, always flowing on, but moderated and controlled; it hurried along in its course, watered the fruitful meadows, set the mills of God in unceasing motion, and bore on its surface the souls of men and blessings for men with peace to the sea of eternity.

"And we beseech you, brethren, rebuke the unquiet, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, *be patient towards all men.*" [76] That is a picture of true zeal put into one sentence. If we wish to correspond to it in the proper way, it is only necessary that the one blessing of the Apostle should be fulfilled in us: *"The Lord direct your hearts, in the charity of God, and the patience of Christ."* [77] For, the love of God will show us the right way to hearts; the patience of Christ will strengthen us in order that we may never lose it in spite of all obstacles.

[76] 1 Thess. 5: 14. [77] 2 Thess. 3: 5.

CHAPTER X

"Strive Earnestly"

TO GIVE much to God's people, to be stay and support to everyone—for this the priest has been called; but no one can give what he has not got; no one can give support, who is himself tottering. Every cure of souls has to begin with the cure of *one's own soul.* "Strive earnestly to present thyself to God as a man approved, a labourer unshamed." [1]

I

There are many reasons why a priest should strive earnestly.

1. In the first place, he owes personal perfection to his *dignity.* "Holy to the Lord!" were the words which Aaron carried on his fillet; and they are impressed in a similar manner on every priest's forehead by the bishop's consecration. "Know you not, that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? But if any man violate the temple of God, him shall God destroy. For the temple of God *is holy, which you are.*" [2] "And grieve not the holy Spirit of God: whereby you *are sealed unto the day of redemption.*" [3] St. Paul addressed these words to all the faithful, but they apply with much greater force to the Lord's anointed. Holiness, then, is expected by

[1] 2 Tim. 2: 15, W. V. [2] 1 Cor. 3: 16. [3] Eph. 4: 30.

God of His anointed one; holiness is also rightly expected of him by the multitude of the faithful.

2. The priest owes perfection also to his *position.*

He is the "ambassador of God," the "apostle of God," and cannot worthily represent his Lord, the Holiest of the holy, if all virtues are not resplendent in him.

He is the "mediator of men," the "master of the Gentiles," a "preacher of the Gospel"; but the multitude can have no confidence in him, they cannot heed his exhortations, if he himself is wanting in the necessary virtues of his state.

3. The priest's *duties,* moreover, demand a perfection befitting his position. He is "the vessel of election," which God uses to *pour forth His gifts.* How carefully the chalice and the monstrance, the corporals and the patens are to be guarded from every desecration; all those objects, in short, that in some way come in contact with the most Sacred Body of Our Lord. How much greater reason there is for the priest to be guarded, the priest who himself is the living chalice of the Lord which is sanctified daily by Christ's Blood.

The priest is the "vessel of election" through which God *communicates His gifts to mankind.* God, however, will not entrust his precious gifts to an unclean, defective vessel; but the purer and nobler the vessel, the more He will fill it with His gifts for men.

The priest should teach the way to salvation; but he cannot do so, if he himself is wandering on the broad way of perdition. He should make others enthusiastic and ardent in God's cause; but this is impossible if it is not a matter that is near his own heart.

He must put up a strong resistance to all evil; but where can his words draw the necessary force, his fight the necessary ardour, if he himself coquets with the kingdom of darkness? He is to lead many not only to be good, but to a higher perfection; but this is inconceivable if he himself remains stationary on the lower levels. Only one who is an expert in his own line can achieve great things; that means, only one who is wholly consumed by his work, who lives for it alone, who is continually more and more absorbed by it, and who indefatigably strives to accomplish the highest in it. We priests must be experts in piety; and, so, it is necessary to give ourselves to our special work with might and main.

4. This earnest striving is further brought home to us in a forcible manner by the duty of *self-preservation.*

a) Strive earnestly—or else you will become an *indifferent* priest. Everything drives us downstream: woe to him who does not exert his full strength to row resolutely against the current. An indifferent priest is a *superficial* priest. Perhaps a great deal of external work is done. Already, on awakening in the morning, all possible plans rush through his head, a few prayers are hastily said, the breviary hastily got through; hastily the white alb and the Mass vestments are put on, and Holy Mass is hurried through; then he rushes into the school, from the school to a meeting, from the meeting to his favourite work, study or reading; after that comes visiting: there is scarcely a prayer, not even so much as a little moment's reflection about oneself, and the few confessions he hears are hurried over.

All this goes on from month to month, from year to year. The result is, that the inner man languishes, the supernatural spirit decreases, the worldly spirit increases. Disorderly inclinations, pride, vanity, ambition, disputatiousness, irritability, love of comfort, and a seeking for pleasure grow apace and choke the good spirit which had been nourished so carefully in the first years. And the worst is, that such a priest does not see this. Looking at all his work, he fondly imagines his treasure-house is filled with jewels, and does not know that, without being perceived, thieves have stolen the real diamonds and have left useless stones in their place. He thinks he is quite healthy and fresh, and does not realise that a slow but surely advancing wasting disease is working ever more harm to his spiritual life: "Because thou sayest: I am rich, and made wealthy, and have need of nothing: and knowest not, that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." [4]

Many apostates, as also the originators of the Reformation and the Old-Catholic movement, worked so feverishly before their fall. They seemed to be men of God; and yet a gust of wind came and the tree fell, for inwardly it had long since been hollow. Active work accompanied by continual self-sanctification leads us near to God; but if it is unaccompanied by this, it very soon leads to deterioration.

It is even worse if this external activity is lacking. "I passed by the field of the slothful man, and by the vineyard of the foolish man: and behold it was all filled with nettles, and thorns had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall was broken down. *Which*

[4] Apoc. 3: 17.

when I had seen, I laid it up in my heart: and by example I received instruction." [5]

It would be sad if a priest pointed out to others the way of Christian perfection, while he himself hurried on to the abyss; if everyone around him, stimulated by his teaching, bedewed with grace from his holy Sacrifice and Sacraments, brought forth good fruit, while he, their priest, brought forth no fruit, or was even like a withered tree in the midst of an orchard full of bloom. Such an one would be like the Scribes of Jerusalem who showed the three Wise men the way to the new-born King, but did not stir a foot themselves. Many of the souls committed to our care perhaps hurry past us, ahead of us; many perhaps after a long life of sin. We must strain every nerve that the great prize be not wrested from us.

b) Strive earnestly, or else you will become a *bad* priest.

If a man allows the ramparts to be demolished through negligence; that is, if he no longer sets daily a firmly fixed dam against all evil by watchfulness and continual resistance, even in regard to the vineyard, the priest's heart, will the words be fulfilled: "All they who pass by the way pluck it; the boar out of the wood hath laid it waste: and a singular wild beast hath devoured it." [6] Many an one who has begun well, has found himself one day, like Peter, suddenly overcome by the evil one, and has wept bitterly for the sudden fall. Often enough thoughtlessness was at the bottom of it; often trifling, at most a protracted, slackening in earnest spiritual striving. Now and then it was de-

[5] Prov. 24: 30-32. [6] Ps. 79: 13, 14.

jection. The man began with great joy in his work, but difficulties arose on all sides. He gave himself up to depression, and so came the favourable moment for a surprise on the enemies' part: for the pleasure in spiritual things had disappeared, strength was weakened, a craving for change and the joy of life awoke, and only the gentle rustling of the serpent was needed, and the forbidden fruit was broken off the tree. "How is the gold become dim, the finest colour is changed, the stones of the sanctuary are scattered in the top of every street! . . . They that were fed delicately have died in the streets; they that were brought up in scarlet have embraced the dung."[7] "*This* is your hour, and the power of darkness."[8]

It is possible for a priest, as it is for any other man, to fall; for he is, after all, "taken from among men." But he must not despair like Judas; he must rise again courageously and with confidence like St. Peter. But what if he does not turn back to God at once, and with all determination?

c) Strive earnestly, or else you will become *a sacrilegious* priest. A sin has been committed. What then? Confession? Shame gets in the way. No confession, and yet go to the altar all the same? A most painful struggle follows. Heaven and hell engage in tempestuous conflict. Then comes a desperate resolution. In sin the unhappy man goes to the Holy Sacrifice. An icy coldness descends upon his soul. Perhaps the same thing happens again. Every time his conscience beats more faintly, and every time the darkness increases in his soul. "And it was night." "Unhappy man that

[7] Lam. 4: 1, 5. [8] Luke 22: 53.

I am."[9] "Let their table become as a snare before them, and a recompense, and a stumbling block."[10]

A sacrilegious Mass! What an outrage, what a crime! Who would dare ever to touch the Blessed Sacrament with sullied hands; nay, what layman would be so bold as to touch the Blessed Sacrament even with *unconsecrated* hands? And yet the sacrilegious priest takes hold of It with his hands which are stained with the filth of sin, and buries It in the vicious den of his heart. "My house shall be called the house of prayer; but you have made it a *den of thieves*."[11]

A sacrilegious priest at the altar is a cursed piece of buffoonery that shocks heaven and earth! He has clothed himself exteriorly with holy vestments, and inwardly . . . ? "And he said to me: Son of man, dig in the wall . . . and behold every form of creeping things and of living creatures, . . . and all the idols of the house of Israel were painted on the wall all round about."[12] "Introibo ad altare Dei," he says He goes to the altar, but not to honour his God—to scoff at Him. He continues, "Judica me, Deus . . ." How terrible if God were to take him at his word! "Lavabo inter innocentes manus meas. . . . Vere dignum et justum est . . . nos tibi semper et ubique gratias agere. . . ." Does not his whole inner self revolt against these lies in his mouth? And now he comes to the consecration: God appears on the altar, called down by the words of an unworthy one. Does not the criminal grow pale with fright? But, worse than ever, Holy Communion comes: "Corpus tuum, Domine, quod sumpsi et sanguis quem potavi adhæreat visceribus meis." Let us stop, for what a terrible curse the

[9] Rom. 7:24.
[10] Ps. 68:23.
[11] Matt. 21:13.
[12] Ezech. 8:8, 10.

word "adhæreat" becomes in the mouth of one who celebrates unworthily.

One sacrilegious Mass! If the faithful heard that *one single* sacrilegious Mass had taken place in their midst, they would shudder as at the news of a murder; they would avoid the cursed spot like a place of execution.

But what if this shocking occurrence recurs and perhaps even for months and years? Dreadful darkness dwells in the heart of such a priest. Not a spark of the love of God, no sense of honour is left. All zeal is extinguished. Often all that remains is an icy coldness.

What will become of the parish? Their *house of God* is daily the scene of new sacrileges. Can God's blessing rest on it? And what about the *cure of souls?* "Even the sea monsters have drawn out the breast, they have given suck to their young: the daughter of my people is cruel, like the ostrich in the desert. The tongue of the suckling child hath stuck to the roof of his mouth for thirst: the little ones have asked for bread, and there was none to break it unto them." [13]

It is true, the unworthy priest still fulfils the duties of his office, but that only increases the misfortune. All the Baptisms in the parish, all Confessions, Communions, marriages, and even all deaths—all of them are branded by the sacrilegious hands with the mark of a theft from God. "Unhappy man that I am!" [14] "I am become as a vessel that is destroyed." [15]

Such an unhappy person can never find a moment's rest, for the constant contradiction between his vocation and his life weighs him down; painful are his qualms

[13] Lam. 4:3, 4. [14] Rom. 7:24. [15] Ps. 30:13.

of conscience and the fears of death; burdensome all duties; painful his whole life. He cannot bear it any longer. Away, "and being hanged, he burst asunder in the midst: and all his bowels gushed out." [16] Oh, God, how quickly and rapidly one goes down to the abyss when one has taken the first step on the downward path. "For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh *judgement* to himself." [17]

d) Strive earnestly, or else you will become in the end an *apostate* priest. "And after the morsel, Satan entered into him . . . and he went out immediately." [18]

No one can stand for any length of time the conflict between one's knowledge of the better thing, and willing what is worse. Either he will conform his wish to his knowledge, or the knowledge to his wish. The unworthy priest, continuing in a state devoid of grace, lacks all light and pleasure in spiritual things; all duties now seem insupportably hard to him; he deeply regrets having chosen the priestly vocation, and begins to be annoyed at everything which led him to that career in life. He sees others have become happy in their priestly vocation, he himself unhappy; now he begins to hate the entire priesthood; he not only tears all former ties asunder, but begins to soil what he had formerly honoured, to attack what he had formerly loved. Spiteful attacks in the papers which are hostile to the Church, the exposure of all secret scandals, a continual raging against all ecclesiastical institutions—all this is now the ordinary thing in his wretched life. "But in a great house there are not only vessels of

[16] Acts 1:18. [17] 1 Cor. 11:29. [18] John 13:27, 30.

gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth: and some indeed unto honour, but some unto dishonour." [19]

What will be the end of such an one? "But if the salt lose its savour . . . it is good for nothing any more but to *be cast out, and to be trodden on by men.*" [20] These words are now fulfilled in their strictest sense. Hardly anyone is more highly esteemed than a good priest; hardly anyone more despised than the unworthy anointed of the Lord. He is really looked upon as "good for nothing any more." It is with difficulty that a new and suitable career opens out to him, and the words "to be trodden on by men" often enough are realized very quickly. Some who were once priests are now painfully eking out a living as newspaper sellers, hired servants, street-singers. And there have not been wanting such miserable wretches to whom we could put up the same epitaph as to Judas, "And being hanged, he burst asunder." [21]

It makes one shudder to think of such falls. "*Which when I had seen, I laid it up in my heart: and by the example I received instruction.*" [22]

And what will the eternity of such ones be? Death will be terrible. What a painful retrospect! In youth in the first years of priesthood he was so pious, pure, believing, and zealous—and then? "Into how much tribulation am I come, and into what floods of sorrow? . . . I that was pleasant and beloved in my power! *But now I remember the evils* that I have done." [23]

Then comes the judgement, when the apostate suddenly stands a captive before his King; the unmasked faithless servant bound before his Lord. "The end is come. . . . Now is an end come upon thee. And I

[19] 2 Tim. 2: 20. [21] Acts 1: 18. [23] 1 Mach. 6:11, 12.
[20] Matt. 5: 13. [22] Prov. 24: 32.

will send my wrath upon thee and I will judge thee according to thy ways: and I will set all thy abominations against thee. And my eye shall not spare thee, and I will show thee no pity." [24]

And the final sentence? "And the unprofitable servant cast ye out into the exterior darkness. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." [25] "Strive to enter by the narrow gate; for many, I say to you, shall seek to enter, and shall not be able. But when the master of the house shall be gone in, and shall shut the door, you shall begin to stand *without,* and to knock at the door, saying: Lord open to us. And he answering, shall say to you: I know you not, whence you are. Then you shall begin to say: *We have eaten* and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. And he shall say to you: I know you not, whence you are: depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you shall see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out. And there shall come from the east and the west, and the north and the south; and shall sit down in the kingdom of God. And behold, they are last that shall be first; and they are first that shall be last." [26]

"All will be well!" Really? Does God allow Himself to be trifled with forever? Was He not severe at last with Saul, with Heli, with the High Priests and Scribes? "For yourselves know perfectly, that the day of the Lord shall so come, as a thief in the night. *For when they shall say, peace and security; then shall sudden destruction come upon them, as the pains upon her that is with child, and they shall not escape.*" [27]

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[24] Ezech. 7: 2-4.
[25] Matt. 25: 30.
[26] Luke 13: 24-30.
[27] 1 Thess. 5: 2-3.

The death of a priest is often sudden: the sky may be bright, but often even from a cloudless sky a destroying flash of lightning darts down—and then? "If the tree shall fall to the south, or to the north, . . . *there shall it be.*" [28] "Why dost thou glory in malice, thou that art mighty in iniquity? . . . Thou hast loved malice more than goodness. . . . Therefore will God destroy thee for ever: he will pluck thee out, and remove thee from thy dwelling place: and thy root out of the land of the living." [29]

II

In what should this earnest striving consist?

1. Above all things, it should be the priest's care to preserve the true *priestly spirit and the spirit of his vocation.* "Neglect not the grace that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with imposition of the hands of the priesthood." [30] A priestly spirit is one that is no longer in bondage to the world, that reaches out to God alone, acts for Him alone, seeks only the honour of God and the good of souls—a spirit ever ready for sacrifice.

This spirit animated the newly ordained priest when, after the imposition of the bishop's hands, he went to his first field of labour. As long as this spirit influences him, he will be one of those who are called blessed, ever vigorous in good, and full of good works. But when this spirit grows cold, all faculties begin to work more wearily and slowly, until the machinery hardly moves, or stops altogether. Woe to that priest in whom the priestly spirit has been quenched. He is like

[28] Eccles. 11: 3. [29] Ps. 51: 3ff. [30] 1 Tim. 4: 14.

the nightingale in whom love has died, and, with love, the songs which were formerly so glorious. Many there are who at first were full of enthusiasm and gave much promise, but later became mute, too often because of indifference or because sin had killed the love of God in their hearts. Important, then, is the exhortation: "For which cause I admonish thee, that *thou stir up* the grace of God which is in thee, by the imposition of my hands." [31]

2. We must, then, above all, avoid everything that lessens and injures the priestly spirit. "Let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of the flesh and of the spirit, perfecting sanctification in the fear of God." [32]

"Defilement of the flesh" means, first of all, the strengthening of the purely natural, the pleasure-seeking, the comfort-loving, the sensual man. Many come out of the seminary with the holiest aspirations. They make their meditation, their examination of conscience, and do their spiritual reading with ease. They are very zealous in their preparation for Holy Mass and their thanksgiving afterwards; but soon, because they find them tedious or because they are too busy or too fond of comfort, or because they have too much to do with other people, now one, now another is left out, until at last of all the spiritual duties only those remain that are absolutely necessary. And even these are done superficially and hastily, so that they make no deep impression. Now and then, especially after a retreat, a spurt for improvement may be made; but after a few weeks, or even days, everything has fallen again into the former sleepy state.

[31] 2 Tim. 1:6. [32] 2 Cor. 7:1.

The consequences cannot fail to appear: spiritual thoughts and inspirations become fewer and fewer, the purely natural ones more frequent. Not what is most useful to souls, but what brings most enjoyment, is the object sought for. Instead of spiritual things, prayer, serious study, careful preparation of our sermons and addresses, frivolous, merely literary and even dangerous reading, or useless games, conversations, social intercourse occupy the time. The life is comfortable and enjoyable. Self-denial is forgotten. Delicacy of conscience and serious self-examination grow less. The sentinels, which were formerly placed at all exits and entrances of the senses, slumber on undisturbed, and the doors are opened wide to all manner of useless and dangerous thoughts, imaginations, dreams, and moods. In social intercourse liberties may be allowed which formerly would have raised a blush. The flesh, in this case the purely natural selfish man, which was formerly kept under, lifts up its head again with power, and at last obtains entire mastery. The kingdom of the world enters in and the kingdom of God departs.

Only too easily do the "defilements of the flesh" in the *real sense* burst forth like poisonous flowers in full bloom from this gradual growth of softness and the domination of the lower self. The pleasures of the palate which are never refused, now lead on to intemperance; the too great liberties lead to dissoluteness. "Wine and women make wise men fall off."[33]

This does not happen suddenly: indeed it often comes about without being noticed. Of course we will never allow it to come to any great disorders, but we must,

[33] Ecclus. 19:2.

after all, allow ourselves a little good cheer; or we are only seeking recreation, or an interchange of ideas, an understanding, the complement of our own self; or we only want to comfort others, to improve them spiritually, and we do not see the serpent, which unobserved is creeping towards us, and already entwines our feet, until it eventually winds round feet, legs, breast, and arms as once Laocoön was entangled. Then fear awakens: a desperate struggle begins. With all one's strength one wants to resist the passion. It is too late! the demon will no longer let his victim go. Strangled, he sinks to the ground, he who had begun so gloriously.

Now and then the ruin is the work of a *moment*. Many an one who always kept good at home has fallen when travelling. "He goeth about seeking whom he may devour." [34] "He goeth about" always and everywhere. "Seeking," always spying for a favourable opportunity, and not infrequently preparing it a long time beforehand. The evil one can take his time. If it is only after long years of undermining that he can cause the whole of God's building to crash, if it is only when the man of God has reached the zenith of life that he can make him fall, the evil one will have attained his end.—*"Keep thyself chaste!"* [35] "Let everyone depart from iniquity who nameth the name of the Lord." [36]

3. No less dangerous than the defilements of the flesh, are the "defilements of *the spirit*." Many an one with high aspirations begins to work for God's cause and that of the Church with great energy, by

[34] 1 Pet. 5:8. [35] 1 Tim. 5:22. [36] 2 Tim. 2:19.

organizing, introducing new methods, doing scholarly work, preaching, and writing. His zeal appears to be holy and pure, and such it very often is in the beginning. But too soon wrong elements become mixed up in it. He meets with opposition and does not receive the position to which he had looked forward, and his suggested innovations meet with objection. His new teachings are found suspicious; he is perhaps unjustly mistrusted; has hard things said about him; is put back and hindered in all his efforts by those in authority. Then real rage flares up; he is angry and morose. The joy in doing changes to depression. One more stern reprimand and, like an explosion, the destructive fire which has been smouldering within, suddenly breaks out in full force. Then the priest with all defiance refuses submission, even breaks asunder the bonds which had held him firm to the Church, and goes over to the enemy's camp. It is not only "wine and women," but very often, as the history of heresies and schisms teaches us, pride which makes the learned apostatize.

Most important, then, for us all is the exhortation: "Let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of the flesh, and of the spirit." To-day more than ever it is of importance; for the priest, like other men, is only too easily infected by the *spirit of the age*, and this is full of the "defilement of the flesh and of the spirit."

"Know also this, that, in the last days, shall come dangerous times. Men shall be lovers of themselves, covetous, haughty, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, wicked, without affection, without peace, slanderers, incontinent, unmerciful, without kindness, traitors, stubborn, puffed up, and lovers of pleasure more than of God: having an appearance in-

deed of godliness, but denying the power thereof. *Now these avoid.*" [37]

4. What is to be done, then? "But I chastise my body, and bring it into subjection: lest perhaps, when I have preached to others, I myself should become a castaway." [38]

We must curb and train our body with all its faculties; we must guard strictly our eyes and ears, the world of thought and imagination, in order that nothing disorderly may creep in. "Munda cor meum ab omnibus *vanis, perversis, et alienis cogitationibus.*" Careful examination may perhaps at times reveal the presence of thoughts that are out of harmony with the priestly spirit: thoughts that we should be ashamed to make known to those we live with, or which in course of time rob us of all joy in our faith and vocation, and bring both of them into danger.

But it is not sufficient to keep everything that is bad far away: the temple of the Holy Ghost, which the priest is, must be filled with good, pious thoughts, imaginations, and holy dispositions. And all this the more so, because from the quality of the thoughts and dispositions which we cherish, good or bad deeds will necessarily come forth, like the fruits from off the trees. "For he that soweth in his flesh, of the flesh also shall reap corruption. But he that soweth in the spirit, of the spirit shall reap life everlasting." [39]

There are those who complain of strong temptations, and of doubts of all kinds. But they cannot expect anything else if so many weed seeds have been sown in the soul by dissipation and indiscreet reading.

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[37] 2 Tim. 3:1-5. [38] 1 Cor. 9:27. [39] Gal. 6:8.

Others there are who with ease and gladness show forth goodness and piety, because in prayer, meditation, study, and spiritual reading they fill their mind with good thoughts, their imagination with noble images, and their heart with pious dispositions.

The inner life of the priest who nourishes his spirit with the Bible, the writings of the Fathers and of the saints is very different from that of one who without heed gives too much time to the works of sceptical modern philosophers, or to writers who are too free. "For everyone shall bear his own burden." [40] "All that is true, all that is seemly, all that is just, all that is pure, all that is lovable, all that is winning—whatever is virtuous or praiseworthy—let such things fill your thoughts." [41]

But this good interior solidity does not come of itself; it must be won by much work, prayer, and study. In addition to chastising the body, we must *bring it into subjection.* This is done by the regular practice of self-denial. One who always allows himself what is lawful, will soon be carried away to that which is unlawful.

What is the Christian's life according to St. Paul's conception, but a gigantic amphitheatre filled with fighting. Every new Christian steps into the great stadium as yet one more condemned to fight against the flesh and the world. The priest is called to be the champion who, by his own strong endurance, gives courage to others. We hear enough of the need of self-denial and mortification: there is need of great examples of it to drive the lesson home.

For this reason the Church has always insisted on a

[40] Gal. 6:5. [41] Philip. 4:8, W. V.

simple way of life and of living in her ministers. Some think they can dispense themselves from this, and that they have to keep pace with the increased display of modern times. "We priests are members of a learned profession," they say; "as such we must adapt ourselves to what is customary in professional circles." We can reply, "Nego paritatem." "But you have not so learned Christ." [42] Priests are disciples of the poor Saviour and the simple apostles. The faithful are quite right in measuring by this standard, mutatis mutandis, the lives of their priests. The faithful have never yet taken offence at a priest because he lived in modest circumstances: but they have treated with disdain many who lived in luxury. To-day, in an age that is inclined to socialism, it is particularly important that the priesthood should return to primitive simplicity and severity of life. People to-day will not put up with a priest who lives luxuriously, any more than with one who is domineering. We do not read that the princes of the Church in past centuries who loved display converted many to Christ; but the faithful gave their full confidence to poor men of simple lives such as St. Francis of Assisi, St. Charles Borromeo, St. John Vianney, etc.

5. Not only must the body be curbed, but the *soul* also must be purified of all disorders. "I therefore, a prisoner in the Lord, beseech you that you walk worthy of the vocation in which you are called, *with all humility and mildness,* with patience, supporting one another in charity." [43]

Humility and gentleness are indeed the most neces-

[42] Eph. 4:20. [43] *Ib.* v. 1.

sary virtues for a priest. They are the characteristics of our divine Saviour which stand out most. He said: "Learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart." [44] They are the marks of *true* virtue. Even to those who later became apostates it has been given to work hard and to have great success, but constantly to submit with humility, to bear humiliations patiently, to take correction willingly, and, in the presence of opposition, ingratitude, and persecution, ever to show themselves peaceful and kind—that you will find only in the true servants of God.

Priestly humility and gentleness are also the *secret of bringing down a blessing on one's work.* Vain, haughty, angry, violent, quarrelsome, irritable priests may be brilliant orators, powerful originators, and indefatigable workers, but they do not attain far-reaching success and lasting results; the faithful are always afraid that they will break out with violence every minute. Earthly rulers may hold their subjects in fear and dread, but the priest should subject everyone to himself by the power of gentleness and charity. "I send you as sheep in the midst of wolves." [45] The Lamb of God with His kindness exercises a much greater authority over people than all earthly potentates with their power and severity. "Blessed are the meek: for they shall possess the land." [46]

Humility and gentleness are also the best *protection for the priest himself.* They preserve him from that discouragement and obstinacy which before now have worked havoc in the life of a priest. "Learn of me because I am meek and humble of heart: *and you shall find rest to your souls.*" [47]

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[44] Matt. 11:29.
[45] *Ib.* 10:16.
[46] *Ib.* 5:4.
[47] *Ib.* 11:29

6. Preserving the priestly spirit is the first thing; *to increase it continually is the next.* This is done by faithful meditation, by frequently calling to mind the great examples of priests, apostles, the Fathers of the Church, the bishops and priests of all ages; by diligent reading of their writings and lives, but especially by a study of the Gospel. Intercourse also with spiritually-minded fellow-priests and contact with an enlightened director are a great help to this end.

But more effective than anything else is an intimate intercourse with God, especially in the Most Blessed Sacrament of the altar; in other words, the cultivation of *the inner life.*

An inner life, however, means a life *in the presence of God.* God is continually before the eyes of a good priest; the good priest often recollects himself before God, and withdraws to Him frequently, like Moses on Mount Sinai. It is a life *beginning in God* (*ex Deo*). He begs counsel from God in all his undertakings, and receives from Him the stimulus for all his work. There before God the eye of his soul is made keenly aware of the needs of the time, and of their remedies. By God's power there is enkindled in his heart that holy spirit which seizes hold of souls, purifies, and transforms them. It is a life *for God* (*pro Deo*), because, walking continually before God, the zealous priest lives for God alone. Self-seeking, vanity, and other ignoble motives are unknown to him.

It is a life *with God* (*cum Deo*). Led on by God, the priest is supported by Him. He considers everything with Him, and awaits help from Him and receives it in rich measure.

One who leads this life will not easily fall far.

"When he shall fall he shall not be bruised, for the Lord putteth his hand under him." [48]

He will not only attain a sublime height, and find sweet peace in his vocation, but, like Moses, he also will be the leader of countless souls to the promised land.

Those priests, however, who are without care for themselves, are truly described by the words of St. Jude: "They are clouds without water, swept along by the winds, trees without fruit in autumn, doubly dead and uprooted, wild waves of the sea flinging up for foam their own shame, wandering stars for whom is reserved dark gloom for evermore." [49]

Their *success* is small. How can they water the garden of God when they themselves have nothing? How can they bring forth fruit if they are without the sap of grace?

At the same time, they are without inner peace and perseverance. They are empty clouds, raging waves of the sea, because they are not guided by the higher spirit of God, but are the sport and temper of unregulated moods.

Often enough they are *wandering stars.* There is much study and work, it is true; but because it is not accompanied by prayer and God's enlightenment, it too easily ends only in error. "Wandering stars, for whom there is reserved dark gloom for evermore."

What urgent motives there are, then, for us to observe the Apostle's words and *to strive earnestly.*

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[48] Ps. 36:24. [49] Vv. 12, 13, W. V.

CHAPTER XI

"One with Him in His Death" [1]

CHRIST'S Cross and resurrection had been a stumbling block to the Jews, and foolishness to the Gentiles. For a long time they appeared as such to Paul, until in that memorable moment at Damascus they were revealed to him as the highest "wisdom of God." After that, he saw the whole world dying in Christ's death, and living once more in Christ's resurrection. In the mystery of Golgotha he saw not only the "meritorious cause" of justification, but, in his usual manner, penetrating deeper down, he saw also its *"exemplary cause."*

In Baptism the Christian lives both Christ's death and resurrection. In the waters of Baptism he kills the purely natural man, and, rising up, he is won for the new supernatural life. "Along with him ye were buried in baptism: along with him also ye had your resurrection through your faith in the power of God, who raised him up from the dead." [2]

And from this the Saint drew the conclusion: "Therefore, if you be risen with Christ, seek the things that are above; where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God: mind the things that are above, not the things that are upon the earth." [3]

What is true of every one of the faithful, applies in a very special manner to the priest. The priest's

[1] Philip. 3: 10, W. V. [2] Col. 2: 12, W. V. [3] *Ib.* 3: 1-3.

ordination is a repetition of Christ's death and resurrection. In it, too, the purely natural life must be laid aside, and a new one must take its place. The priest is at the same time one who is dead, and one who has risen again.

I

1. *"For you are dead; and your life is hid with Christ in God."* [4]

These words, which Paul addressed to his new converts, had been his own experience. In that moment at Damascus he had certainly died: he had died to the erring and failing past, died to all self-will and blind instinct, died also to everything which fettered him to this earth. The ties of blood relationship and the traditional upbringing of his race, had all been torn asunder. "Being circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; according to the law, a Pharisee: according to zeal, persecuting the church of God: according to the justice that is in the law, conversing without blame. But the things that were gain to me, the same I have counted loss for Christ. Furthermore I count all things to be but loss for the excellent knowledge of Jesus Christ my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but as dung, that I may gain Christ." [5]

Whatever the world offered him—power, honour, influence—he dashed it all in pieces at her feet. He did not mind whether it was suspicion, persecution, ridicule, or scorn with which she threatened him. He did not

[4] Col. 3:3. [5] Philip. 3:5-8.

make the claims on life that others make, and necessities which to others are indispensable means of life, were unknown to him. Praise and blame troubled him so little that he could exclaim: "But to me it is a very small thing to be judged by you, or by man's day; but neither do I judge my own self . . . but he that judgeth me, is the Lord." [6] Without possessions, single, homeless, and restless he wandered about, dead to this world, dead even to the fears of death, which he boldly challenged into the lists with the triumphal song: "O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting?" [7]

2. Those words *"For you are dead,"* are addressed also to the priest. He, too, must sojourn as a dead one among the living. His very exterior brings this vocation home to him, for the very clothes he wears are black, the colour of death. To friend and foe, he appears as one dead, as one buried. For the faithful Christian sees in the priest a spiritual man, who, dead to everything earthly, lives only for the other world; the unbeliever sees in him a misguided enthusiast, and a fool, an obscurantist, a reactionary, a pitiable religious fanatic and self-tormentor; in other words, a dead person, who has cheated himself out of this life, and, like a departed ghost, now wanders about everywhere in order to spoil everyone else's joy in life. "We fools esteemed their life madness and their end without honour." [8]

The priest, however, should not only appear to be as one dead; he should *actually be such.*

He should be dead to the entire kingdom of ***sin.***

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[6] 1 Cor. 4:3, 4. [7] *Ib.* 15:55. [8] Wis. 5:4.

Since the head, the risen Christ, has risen above all sin, it would be unseemly if the priest, a privileged member of the Lord's body, still lay buried in the miserable shadow of sin. One who is a lamb of God to take away the sins of the world, who as a powerful exorcist is to crush the serpent's head, and as a terrifying commander to drive the prince of darkness out of his castles, could not do justice to these tasks if he himself were fallen a victim of sin, or were entangled by the brood of serpents, or had become a slave of the evil spirit. Only one who like Christ can say: "Which of you shall convince me of sin?" [9] can stem the flood of destruction; only one who can say as He: "For the prince of this world cometh, and in me he hath not anything," [10] is able to put his foot on the evil one's neck and call out: "Thus far and no further!"

"Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, so as to obey the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of iniquity unto sin." [11] "So do you also reckon, that *you are dead to sin.*" [12] That, then, is the first demand which the priesthood makes on its bearer.

This death is, in part, sudden. In justification those sins that were present in the heart were buried in a moment. "When we were dead in sins, [God] hath quickened us together in Christ (by whose grace you are saved)." [13]

But after sin there remains the *inclination to sin,* and this must be killed: "For we that are dead to sin, how shall we live any longer therein?" [14] And this is not destroyed by a sudden quick end, but only by long continual struggle. The priest "taken from among

[9] John 8:46. [11] Rom. 6:12, 13. [13] Eph. 2:5.
[10] *Ib.* 14:30. [12] *Ib.* v. 11. [14] Rom. 6:2.

men" pays his tribute to humanity. The all too human element which pulsates in all Adam's offspring, involves him likewise in hard fights. Even the dead man of Damascus still cried out with groaning: "For I know that there dwelleth not in me, that is to say, in my flesh, that which is good. For to will, is present with me; but to accomplish that which is good, I find not. For the good which I will, I do not; but the evil which I will not, that I do. . . . For I am delighted with the law of God, according to the inward man: but I see another law in my members, fighting against the law of my mind, and captivating me in the law of sin, that is in my members. Unhappy man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" [15] If the Apostle still cried out in this refrain, the priest cannot be surprised if he himself is still in a state of ferment and turmoil. And so the Apostle did not say that sin *"does not reign"* in you, but *"let it not reign."* "Neither yield ye your members as instruments of iniquity unto sin."

To restrain the limbs and faculties of body and soul in spite of all enticement and solicitation to the contrary; to restrain the understanding, the eyes, ears, mouth, heart, hands, and feet, in order that they do not serve evil, but prove themselves useful for good—that is the death to sin, which we mortals here below can and must attain.

But this death does not come without *continual mortification:* "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, lust, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is the service of idols." [16]

[15] *Ib.* 7:18, 19, 22-24. [16] Col. 3:5.

Mortification means watching continually over oneself in order to repel at once the first evil movements. But it means more than that: it means also advancing to the attack, hunting the enemies out in their hiding places, imposing voluntary sacrifices on them. Only in this way will the old man be slain; only thus will the whole "self" be made subject to the new law of the spirit.

But the priest's endeavour extends even further. He must deprive not only the sinful man, but also the *purely natural man* of all exuberant vitality.

The servant of the Lord should make it his duty to "taste the things which are above, not those which are upon the earth." He does not need the motive forces which put the children of this world into action: authority, power, success, fame, gain, pleasure. God alone and things divine are the lodestars of his work. He has put aside the many necessities which the children of this earth have painfully forced upon themselves: fascinating pleasures, comforts, luxury, sumptuous living. He has put them aside and continues to do so, making his own the words of St. Paul: "But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world: and certainly we can carry nothing out. But having food, and wherewith to be covered, with these we are content." [17] And even the most harmless and the most enticing fruits of the tree of life, such as earthly love and domestic happiness, which are the desire of so many, are left hanging on the branches untouched.

He is intractable to everything whereby human *opinion* entices and threatens. Praise and flattery do

[17] 1 Tim. 6:6-8.

not enervate him; failure, blame and contempt—even calumny—do not break him down. To all human wit he replies with the words: "But to me it is a very small thing to be judged by you, or by man's day; . . . but he that judgeth me, is the Lord. Therefore judge not before the time; until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts; and then shall every man have praise from God." [18]

And even should persecutions, fetters, and death come—in that case too the priest, with St. Paul, begins to sing the sublime song: "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom the world is crucified to me, and I to the world." [19] For even though the enemy should rob him of everything, one thing he knows he will not wrest from him, one thing in comparison with which everything else is merely dust; viz., his Lord and God. "Who then shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation? or distress? or famine? or nakedness? or danger? or persecution? or the sword? (As it is written: For thy sake we are put to death all the day long. We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.) But in all these things we overcome, because of him that hath loved us." [20]

This greatness of soul, however, is not innate, but becomes ours only by laborious and continual fighting: "Stripping yourselves of the old man with his deeds." [21] "Stripping"—we must wrest one piece of armour after the other from the old man. This is done by trying, first of all, to recognize our merely natural impulses, and then to change them into supernatural ones.

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[18] 1 Cor. 4:3-5.
[19] Gal. 6:14.
[20] Rom. 8:35.
[21] Col. 3:9.

Let us examine our *intentions*. Why do you wish to undertake this or that? to go for this walk now? Why do you want to carry on this conversation? Is it because you believe you can serve God better by it, and be of use to souls? Or is it because *it pleases you?*

Let us examine our *speech* and *judgements*. Why do you pass such a judgement on that person, that fellow-worker, that undertaking, those sermons and speeches? Why do you encourage or hinder them? Is it because they seem serviceable or harmful to God's cause? Or is it because they just suit or do not suit *you?*

Let us examine our *moods*. "Quare tristis es anima mea, et quare conturbas me?" [22] Why are you so sad about that judgement, that failure, that difficulty, those obstacles? Is it because God is injured by them and because they injure His kingdom? Or is it only because *you yourself* are suffering from it? Why are you, on the other hand, so glad at recognition, success, etc? Is it because God's honour increases by it or only because *you yourself receive an increase of glory?*

One who makes this examination of conscience with earnestness, will be astonished how far he is from being dead, and how strongly, on the conrtary, the purely natural man still lives in him.

Once the nature is recognized, it becomes a question of *mortifying it*, of not granting it the satisfaction it seeks, but of continuing to work at our intention, our judgement, and our moods until they have God alone for their object. No longer to do and desire anything from a purely natural love of pleasure, from comfort, from vanity, from a passion for fame, from envy or a

[22] Ps. 41:6.

desire for revenge: to draw everything to God and the divine—that is "stripping the old man with *his deeds.*" That is dying the death of men of God.

II

1. Paul fell to earth spiritually dead before the gates of Damascus, but no living man ever rose up again in such strength as did this dead one. As from the grave of Golgotha, so from Paul's heart a new Christ grew up. The Apostle had, first of all, experienced in himself what he later wrote to the Romans: "So do you also reckon, that you are dead to sin, but alive unto God, in Christ Jesus our Lord." [23] With the natural death entirely new forces awoke in him. The animal man had been buried; the spiritual man was born: the man begotten by grace, permeated with grace, and borne aloft by grace to the summit of holiness.

The new life was a "hidden life"; one hidden from man's eye, seen by God and angels alone: a life *for God* and in God: *"in Christ Jesus,"* after the pattern of Christ and united with Him.

The dead priest too is a living person, one who is very much alive, one who has only just begun to live. His life too is a *"hidden life,"* a life that is lived interiorly. It is a spiritual life: "But you are not in the flesh, but in the spirit." [24] It is a life born of grace and perfecting itself in grace.

The Holy Spirit accomplishes a sublime work in the priest's soul. If the soul shines with fresh brightness each time a sacrament is worthily received, how brilliantly the priest's soul, after all, must shine, since it is

[23] Rom. 6:11. [24] *Ib.* 8:9.

so often bathed in God's light. The good priest in his black habit is like certain crystal mountains. The exterior is unattractive and dull, but, led by the guide with a burning torch, just step into the innermost cave: there it is shining and sparkling. So it is with the priest: his exterior is insignificant, but inwardly what a fullness of grace! "For you are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God."

This life, however, is not one that remains inactive, but one that *pours forth its fullness outside.* The dead priest wanders through the world restlessly and unselfishly like St. Paul, a dead man giving life to dead people. True to the words "Neither yield ye your members as instruments of iniquity unto sin," he follows out also those others "but present yourselves to God, as those that are alive from the dead, and *your members as instruments of justice unto God.*" [25] All the faculties of his mind and body: his intellect, his imagination, his words, his hands and feet, are all placed as instruments of justice at God's service. Everything breathes only the spiritual, everything speaks only of the eternal.

The true man of God wanders about among men like our risen Saviour, a transfigured person, a departed one, a heavenly person, who proclaims the eternal, and continually calls others to the eternal and the good. He does justice to the words: "Therefore, if you be risen with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God: mind the things that are above, not the things that are upon the earth." [26]

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[25] Rom. 6:13. [26] Col. 3:1.

2. Yet even this life *needs continual cultivation,* since it is so closely watched by people of this world.

Only in solitude can it be won and maintained. "For your life" not *is,* but I would say *"should be* hid in Christ Jesus." The priest must mix with the world, but his intercourse with it should be like that of Our Saviour after His resurrection. Where there was need of His comfort and advice, the risen Saviour was to be found among men; where they could do without Him, He had disappeared from mortal gaze and remained in silent contemplation with His Father and the Holy Ghost. The priest's home is his study, his room, the church, and his prie-dieu. There he receives those gifts which he is called to give to the multitude that tarries outside. The world is empty of good, and he who fraternizes too much with her, becomes empty himself. God is fulness: he who associates with Him in silence, will himself be filled with good things. "Let the word of Christ dwell in you abundantly, in all wisdom: teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual canticles, singing in grace in your hearts to God." [27]

Spiritual life requires *spiritual nourishment.* Let us give it to the soul. Let the "word of Christ" by diligent meditation and reading "dwell in us abundantly," by study and mutual edification, "teaching and admonishing one another." Let it continually increase in us by our recitation of the breviary and by the solemn services of the Church, "in psalms, hymns, and spiritual canticles." All this will incline us towards the spiritual far more than purely worldly things would.

The resurrection of the new man, like the mortifica-

[27] *Ib.* v. 16.

tion of the old one, is not attained without our daily, our hourly *work of transformation.* To the stripping of the old man with all his deeds, the Apostle opposed the *"putting on the new,* him who is renewed unto knowledge, according to the image of him that created him." [28] Just as the old man is disarmed only piece by piece, so the new man is put on only piece by piece. Just as the young artist who is sketching, looks at his model, so must we continually look up at our example, Jesus Christ, and seek to form Him in ourselves trait by trait. We should not only ask ourselves "Have I failed in this?" but "Did I on that occasion speak, think, feel, act, as Christ would have spoken, thought, felt, or acted in a similar situation?" "All whatsoever you do in word or in work, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to God and the Father by him." [29] Thus and thus only will the divine pattern be formed in us so that we can say: "And I live, now not I; but Christ liveth in me. And that I live now in the flesh: I live in the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered himself for me." [30] Only thus can we as the "form of the flock" cry to the faithful: "Be ye followers of me, as I also am of Christ." [31]

All these means need further supplementing by a deep realization and tender love of our *relation to Jesus Christ.* "Your life is hid with Christ in God." The hidden Godhead in the silence of the tabernacle should be the priest's home; there he should build his nest like the sparrow, thither like the turtle-dove he should carry his sighs. "How lovely are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! My soul longeth and fainteth for the courts of the Lord. . . . For the sparrow hath found herself a

[28] Col. 3:10. [29] *Ib.* v. 17. [30] Gal. 2:20. [31] 1 Cor. 4:16.

house, and the turtle a nest for herself where she may lay her young ones: Thy altars, O Lord of hosts [I will seek]." [32]

It would be sad if pious layfolk were to be found in quiet adoration in church, but the very one who is called to be the tabernacle's custodian was seldom to be found there.

The good priest will seek his Lord and Saviour not only bodily, but he will often think of Him *in spirit*. For Christ is his Leader, his Counsellor, his friend and Helper. "Furthermore I count all things to be but loss for the excellent knowledge of Jesus Christ my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but as dung, that I may gain Christ." [33] That is the priest's device also.

3. The mystical death of every soul that loves God is painful like every other death: it is painful, but it is also accompanied by manifold consolations.

The priest wanders as a dead man among the living, just as Paul did, but the dead man gives life to the world. The dead have often indeed more power than the living. Everyone, even the most powerful and the wisest of men, is filled with fear when a departed spirit appears once more, even though it had remained unnoticed when it wandered about in its mortal body. It is just the same in other spheres. Many a pioneer in art and science lived on unknown, and began to live really only after his death, when, owing to his want of recognition and failure, he had died of hunger in some poor garret. His thoughts were then revealed, his plans put into execution; his paintings filled the art galleries,

[32] Ps. 83: 2ff. [33] Philip. 3: 8.

and a whole world gave itself up to his thoughts and the study of his art. Then his spirit began its triumphal procession through the world.

It is true also to-day that the seed of corn does not begin to give out life until it is dead. Did not the dead rise from their graves when Christ bowed down His head in death? And does not this same drama continue to be repeated?

When Paul died, an entire part of the world which was dead, gained life through him. "So then death worketh in us, but life in you." [34] And in after times wherever the priesthood died by self-denial, self-renunciation, and self-sanctification, perhaps even by persecution and martyrdom, the dead worlds round about were born anew. It is still so to-day. The world will not give a hearing to priests who live in a worldly fashion; they are too much flesh of their flesh, bone of their bone. But it surrenders to one who is dead to the world, because the reverence that hangs around every departed one takes them in its ban.

From his death new life blossoms forth for his contemporaries; this is the first consolation of the priest who dies interiorly. *He himself* also gains, and that is his compensation. "For which cause we faint not; but though our *outward man is corrupted, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.*" [35]

This daily increase of grace is a great comfort to him. All strive for progress, but others' progress often is only misty vapour, which passes away; but there matures in him a greatness that will last for eternity. What could oppress him now when everything serves only to advance his growth, when he continually draws

[34] 2 Cor. 4:12. [35] *Ib.* v. 16.

new vital force from all his endeavours? He is risen, he is above all earthly trouble, and all earthly death: "Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall live also together with Christ: knowing that Christ rising again from the dead, dieth now no more, death shall no more have dominion over him." [36] Nothing earthly, then, can any longer cause him sadness for any length of time, for he has always the Apostle's words in his mind: "For that which is at present *momentary and light* of our tribulation, worketh for us *above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory.* While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen, are temporal; but the things which are not seen, are eternal." [37] And because he already walks in heaven, and the Easter sun shines overhead, a continual feeling of festivity and victory fills his heart. To *the natural man* life is a day of death, but to the *supernatural man* it is an Easter Day, a continual Lord's Day.

Even should clouds envelop him, hopeful joy always shines through: "rejoicing in hope." [38] One who loves God, knows only too well: "Our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, our Lord Jesus Christ, who will reform the body of our lowness, made like to the body of his glory, according to the operation whereby also he is able to subdue all things unto himself." [39]

The world to-day may continue to celebrate her triumph over the priesthood: but at last the priesthood's King will come to subject the world to Himself. Now the priest's life is hidden. Poets and warriors are

[36] Rom. 6:8, 9.
[37] 2 Cor. 4:17, 18.
[38] Rom. 12:12.
[39] Philip. 3:20, 21.

loudly praised; monuments are erected to the great ones of this world: but of the quiet working of God's servants in unknown places of grace and by sick beds, of his alms and good pastoral visits, of his sacrifices and pains, of his hours on Mount Olivet and on Golgotha the world is silent. "For you are dead; and your life is *hid* with Christ in God." [40] But a comfort remains for him that *"When Christ shall appear, who is your life, then you also shall appear with him in glory."* [41] "For we know, if our earthly house of this habitation be dissolved, that we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in heaven." [42]

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[40] Col. 3:3. [41] *Ib.* v. 4. [42] 2 Cor. 5:1.

CHAPTER XII

"Let Us Go Forth To Him" [1]

IN THE Israelites' wandering through the desert it was customary to burn the victims outside the camp. In accordance with this type, says St. Paul, Christ also wanted to offer His Sacrifice of the Cross outside the city gates. "Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people by his own blood, suffered without the gate." [2] And to this he joins the summons, *"Let us go forth therefore to him without the camp, bearing his reproach."* [3] We priests should often make a pilgrimage, in spirit at least, to the Crucified One outside the gates of Jerusalem: we should frequently steep ourselves in Christ's sufferings and death. "Exeamus *considerantes,* et exeamus *improperium ejus portantes.*"

A

Considerantes! "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly vocation, *consider* the apostle and high priest of our confession, Jesus." [4] Let us also consider! Do we meditate much on Christ's sufferings? Do we priests also tread the way of the Cross? Are we, like the saints, enkindled with a deep devotion to the wounds and death struggles of Our Lord? ***And yet that is necessary for us.***

[1] Heb. 13:13. [2] *Ib.* v. 12. [3] *Ib.* v. 13. [4] *Ib.* 3:1.

1. "Let us go forth to *Him!*" That one word says everything. For, after all, we like to remember *great historical personages* who died a *tragic* death: but no one's end was ever more tragic than the death before Jerusalem's gates of the Crucified One, whose life was so pure, whose person so noble, whose condemnation so unjust, whose death so cruel. "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour: that, through the grace of God, he might taste death for all. For it became him, *for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, who had brought many children into glory,* to perfect the author of their salvation, by his passion." [5]

This sufferer, moreover, is our *God.* "For to which of the angels hath he said at any time, Thou art my son, to-day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a son?" [6] The Father Himself summons everyone to adore His Son. "Again, when he bringeth in the first begotten into the world, he saith: And let all the angels of God adore him!" [7] On that occasion all the angels were by the blood-stained Cross; and, surely, we will not be missing at the death of our King and God! Surely, we should often think of Our Saviour's last hours, we, whom He has *bound so intimately to Himself by grace.* "For nowhere doth he take hold of the angels: but of the *seed of Abraham* he taketh hold." [8] And He does that in order to share with us, all His labours and cares. "It behoved him in all things to be made like unto his brethren." [9] He steps down in His mercy to our bed

[5] Heb. 2:9, 10. [6] *Ib.* 1:5. [7] *Ib.* v. 6. [8] *Ib.* 2:16. [9] *Ib.* v. 17.

of pain; and, surely, we are not going to leave him on his death-bed alone!

2. Do we also consider what *we have obtained by this death before Sion's gates? "That he might be a propitiation for the sins of the people."* [10] "That, through death, he might destroy him who had the empire of death, that is to say, the devil: and might deliver them, *who through the fear of death were all their lifetime subject to servitude."* [11] The fear of eternal death would weigh heavily on us all if it were not for Him, and life would be so oppressive with this fear of eternity. He took the weight from our hearts by his death, and shall we forget *this death?*

"That he might sanctify the people by his own blood, he suffered without the gate." [12] All the virtue and whatever possibility of holiness we possess flows from this same source.

Furthermore, we must consider that we have become *one with Him* who was rejected outside Sion's walls. He has made a *new covenant* with us. "And therefore he is the mediator of the new testament: that by means of his death . . . . they that are called may receive the promise of eternal inheritance." [13] And He has even sealed this testament with His blood. How significant, then, the end of the Old Testament is. "For when every commandment of the law had been read by Moses to all the people, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water, and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, saying: This is the blood of the testament, which God hath enjoined unto you." [14] But the sealing of the New Testament

[10] *Ib.*
[11] *Ib.* vv. 14, 15.
[12] *Ib.* 13:12.
[13] *Ib.* 9:15.
[14] *Ib.* vv. 19, 20.

was much more impressive. From the wounds of the Crucified One before Jerusalem, the servants of Our Lord draw the sacred Blood with which in Baptism and Confession, in the Blessed Sacrament and holy Extreme Unction they sprinkle innumerable persons of all peoples and nations, and thus unite them with Him in a testament of blood which embraces all peoples. "For both he that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are all of one. For which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren." [15] They unite them in a testament of blood unto eternal life. "And being consummated, he became, to all that obey him, the cause of eternal salvation." [16]

3. All these considerations are crowned by the thought that this sacrifice was made through an *unselfish love,* out of love for us. Jesus Christ was a victim of love. "He hath loved us, and hath delivered himself for us, an oblation and a sacrifice to God for an odour of sweetness." [17] It is no wonder that St. Paul could never get away from the thought of Golgotha, that he could not announce anything else to the world than "Jesus Christ and him crucified." It is no wonder that the Church, following him, has planted the cross everywhere, on temples and chapels, on the chalice and the sacred vestments, in streets and public squares, in woodland shades and in the billowing cornfields, in valleys and high up on the mountains. It must strike a pagan coming from Japan or China, on a journey in the Catholic countries of Europe, when he finds everywhere more frequently than the statues of great

[15] Heb. 2:11. [16] *Ib.* 5:9. [17] Eph. 5:2.

men, that of a Man of Sorrows, of One who was despised and executed.

The Church knows how to value the act of Golgotha, and so she calls out: *"Consider* the apostle and high priest of our confession, Jesus!" [18]

B

I

Even though these motives are sufficient, there are other ones special *to us priests.*

1. "Consider *the high priest!"* The Man of Sorrows before Jerusalem's walls is the priest's *High Priest,* his Lord, his Leader, to whom he is bound in a sublime fellowship of life, of thought, of work, and of fight. "The high priest *of our confession."* [19] "Called by God a high priest according to the *order of Melchisedech."* [20] To which order the priest also belongs himself, and "of whom we have *much to say,* and hard to be intelligibly uttered." [21]

The High Priest on Golgotha's heights is the priest's *pride and joy.* "For it was fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; who needeth not daily (as the other priests) to offer sacrifices first for his own sins, and then for the people's." [22] A holy awe filled the expectant multitude when in the temple of old, the high priest on the great day of atonement—the only time in the year—entered into the Holy of Holies to make expiation. Greater

[18] Heb. 3:1.
[19] *Ib.* v. 1.
[20] *Ib.* 5:10.
[21] *Ib.* v. 11.
[22] *Ib.* 7:26, 27.

things happened before Jerusalem's gates when Christ's soul parted from His body. "Christ being come an high priest of the good things to come, by a *greater and more perfect tabernacle* not made with hand, that is, not of this creation: neither by the blood of goats or of calves, but *by his own blood, entered once* into the holies, having obtained eternal redemption." [23] "For Jesus is not entered into the holies made with hands, the patterns of the true: *but into heaven itself, that he may appear now in the presence of God for us.*" [24]

From *this* entry into the Holy of Holies the priesthood derived and still continues to derive its whole value and its entire power. "And others indeed were made many priests, because by reason of death they were not suffered to continue: but this, for that *he continueth for ever, hath an everlasting priesthood, whereby he is able to save for ever them that come to God by him; always living to make intercession for us.*" [25] *"But this man offering one sacrifice for sins, for ever sitteth on the right hand of God, from henceforth expecting, until his enemies be made his footstool.* For by one oblation he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." [26] Christ's Blood is the source whence we draw our priestly life, and so it is our duty to go often in spirit to the death-scene of our High Priest.

2. *"Consider"*—for the Crucified One is the priest's *mirror of virtue.* At the sight of Him those virtues are aroused in us which are necessary to us *personally:* fear of God, confidence in God, contrition, humility

[23] Heb. 9:11, 12.
[24] *Ib.* v. 24.
[25] *Ib.* 7:23-25.
[26] *Ib.* 10:12-14.

and, above all, love of God: "Sic dilexit Deus mundum!"

The virtues of our office too are once more animated, to wit: *fidelity to duty* in spite of all obstacles, "becoming obedient unto death!" [27] *zeal for souls,* "He loved me and delivered himself for me;" [28] *meekness:* "Who when he was reviled, did not revile; when he suffered, he threatened not!" [29] *unselfishness:* "He emptied himself"; [30] *patience,* "He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb without voice before his shearer, so openeth he not his mouth"; [31] *endurance: "I have finished* the work which thou gavest me to do." [32]

"Consider"—for the Crucified One before Jerusalem's gate is the priest's *hope and comfort:* "Every high priest . . . is ordained *for men"* [33] and therefore *for the priest also.* He is ordained as an advocate also: "That he may offer up gifts and sacrifices *for sins,"* [34] and therefore for *the priest's sins also.* What a comfort this is! "For if the blood of goats and of oxen, and the ashes of an heifer being sprinkled, sanctify such as are defiled, to the cleansing of the flesh: *how much more shall the blood of Christ,* who by the Holy Ghost offered *himself unspotted unto God, cleanse our conscience from dead works,* to serve the living God?" [35] For should my unworthiness at the altar frighten me, Christ's Blood, which the eternal High Priest offers with me to the Father, must give me courage once more, because in the consecration He offers it for me also, "pro me peccatore." It will "cleanse *our conscience* from dead works," and so the burden disap-

[27] Philip. 2:8.
[28] Gal. 2:20.
[29] 1 Pet. 2:23.
[30] Philip. 2:7.
[31] Acts 8:32.
[32] John 17:4.
[33] Heb. 5:1.
[34] *Ib.*
[35] *Ib.* 9:13, 14.

pears at the consecration. *"To serve the living God!"* —the soul often bedewed with Christ's Blood, becomes always purer, always more capable of serving the Lord, and of receiving graces for itself and the people.

At the same time this suffering High Priest has *understanding* for the sorrows of His priests. "For we have not a high priest, who cannot have compassion on our infirmities: but one tempted in all things like as we are, without sin. Let us go therefore with confidence to the throne of grace: that we may obtain mercy, and find grace in seasonable aid." [36]

He shows us also the happy *result* of all our sufferings. "But we see Jesus . . . for the suffering of death, *crowned with glory and honour.*" [37] "He entered into the [*Holy of*] *Holies, having obtained eternal redemption.*" [38] "Made a high priest for ever." [39] "But this man offering one sacrifice for sins, for ever sitteth on the right hand of God, from henceforth expecting, *until his enemies be made his footstool.*" [40]

"Having therefore, brethren, a *confidence* in the entering into the holies by the blood of Christ; *a new and living way which he hath dedicated for us* through the veil, that is to say, his flesh, and a high priest over the house of God: let us draw near with a true heart in fullness of faith." [41]

Let us draw near, therefore, *considering;* but let the meditation bring forth *fruit.*

II

"Let us go forth to him . . . *bearing his reproach!*" Let us take His sufferings on ourselves willingly!

[36] Heb. 4:15, 16. [37] *Ib.* 2:9. [38] *Ib.* 9:12. [39] *Ib.* 6:20. [40] *Ib.* 10:12, 13. [41] *Ib.* vv. 19-22.

Our priestly sufferings are His sufferings, and His sufferings are the priest's sufferings.

1. *His reproach* consists in this, that "He suffered *without the gate*" on a cursed and outlawed place of execution, which was avoided by all.

He was driven out of the town, *rejected . . . repulsed . . . isolated . . . despised*—by the learned, by statesmen and the people. He was *cursed . . . ridiculed . . . overpowered.* Without any just reason he was chained, robbed, condemned, beaten, killed . . . and moreover *forsaken by all . . . !*

His *sufferings* were so bitter, no roof for his head . . . poverty . . . thirst . . . pains . . . and, moreover, *cares.* He had cares for the deluded blind people who were ruining themselves; for the whole country which was marked for destruction; care for His Mother now a poor helpless widow; care for the disciples, who were in danger. . . . To all this there was added a deep interior sadness. There was no help! He was left defenceless to the scourgers! There was no comfort in prayer. . . . He was forgotten by God and by man. "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Why??? These are all sufferings that can come to us. Does not the Catholic priesthood often enough feel itself, as it were, pushed outside the gate, isolated, despised, cursed, and overcome? Is not this exactly *His reproach?*

2. *"Bearing."* Let us take up His reproach, for this reproach of our High Priest and King is our *state dress.* Will we have matters go better with us than with Him?

To bear this "reproach" courageously, is a sign of *genuine love and fidelity,* for many are ready to ac-

company Him to Thabor, but few indeed to go with Him to Golgotha.

It is our *state dress!* Is it not a much greater distinction to be reviled with *Him* who hangs before Sion's walls, than to revile this noble one? He who hangs out there forsaken was the Truth and Virtue; what reigned within the walls was delusion and wickedness. The thought that they also are rejected, that they also are isolated must fill the whole priesthood with joy and pride. This proscription also gives us the surest pledge that *we are on the right way.* "If the world hate you, know ye, that it hath *hated me before you. If you had been of the world, the world would love its own: but because you are not of the world,* but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." [42]

The reproach of Christ is our *protecting garment.* It is the cuirass which guards the true priestly spirit in our interior. Often times of rest, of comfort, and of good-living have killed the genuine priestly spirit. But when persecutions and sufferings came, there blossomed forth once more self-denial, zeal, a stripping of everything earthly, and a love of God and of souls. One who joyfully embraces Christ's Cross stands firm; from such an one the darts of the worldly spirit rebound and he runs the course like a giant. He has also the power to supplant the enemy from his bulwarks; for only an opponent is fatal to an opponent. When once again the Crucified One has entirely set up His throne in a priest, the words are fulfilled: "Now is the judgement of the world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out." [43]

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[42] John 15: 18, 19. [43] *Ib.* 12: 31.

The reproach of Christ is our *coronation robe.* "As you are partakers of the sufferings, so shall you be also of the *consolation.*" [44] "He humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross. *For which cause God also hath exalted him,* and hath given him a name which is above all names: that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth: and that every tongue should confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father." [45]

* * *

We have important reasons, then, for taking gladly on ourselves the reproach of Christ. "Let us draw near with a true heart *in fullness of faith,* having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with clean water. *Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering* . . . and let us consider one another, to provoke unto charity and to good works: *not forsaking our assembly,* as some are accustomed; but *comforting one another, and so much the more as you see the day approaching.*" [46]

Let us take example from those prophets and priestly heroes whom St. Paul depicts: "Who by faith conquered kingdoms, wrought justice, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions. . . . And others had *trial of mockeries and stripes,* moreover also of *bands and prisons.* They were stoned, they were cut asunder, they were tempted, they were put to death by the sword, *they wandered about in sheepskins, in goatskins, being in want, distressed, afflicted:* of whom the world was not worthy: *wandering in deserts, in mountains, and in dens, and in caves of the earth.*" [47] There always were

[44] 2 Cor. 1:7.
[45] Philip. 2:8-11.
[46] Heb. 10:22-25.
[47] *Ib.* 11:33-38.

such priestly heroes in the Church. Such there were at the time of the first persecution, such at the time of Arianism, at the time of the French Revolution, such at the time of the Kulturkampf, and the persecution of the Christians in China, when, "being in want, distressed . . . wandering in deserts . . . in caves, etc.," repeated itself literally. Never did the One who was rejected before Sion's gates fail to find companions. The priesthood of the Catholic Church kept faithful watch beside the outlawed High Priest, wasting away with Him outside the camp, in order to reign more gloriously with Him one day in the true Sion. "And therefore we also *having so great a cloud of witnesses over our head,* laying aside every weight and sin which surrounds us, *let us run by patience to the fight proposed to us, looking on Jesus the author and finisher of our faith,* who having joy set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, *and now sitteth at the right hand of the throne of God. For think diligently upon him that endured such opposition from sinners against himself: that you be not wearied,* fainting in your minds. For you have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin. *And you have forgotten the consolation* which speaketh to you as unto *children* saying: "My son, neglect not the discipline of the Lord; neither be thou wearied whilst thou art rebuked by him. For *whom the Lord loveth, he chastiseth.*" [48] "Now all chastisement for the present indeed seemeth not to bring with it joy, but sorrow: but afterwards it will yield, to them that are exercised by it, the most peaceable fruit of justice." [49]

[48] Heb. 12:1-5, 6. [49] *Ib.* 12:11.

CHAPTER XIII

"We Are Made a Spectacle to the World"[1]

PAUL'S activity has passed before our eyes. He has come before us as a "vessel of election," an "apostle of Christ," a "man of God" a "mediator of men," a "soldier of Christ," a "wise architect," a "preacher of the Gospel," as "one with Christ in His death," as a "minister of the Church," and as "one more abundantly zealous." All these titles which have been given him contain, however, only individual episodes from the one great picture of the Apostle's life, which he himself characterised with the words: "We are made a spectacle to the world, and to angels, and to men."[2]

This champion of Christ presented in the countries of the Mediterranean one of the most powerful spectacles that the world has ever seen. His arena was the world of Nero; his opponents were very powerful and very numerous—and yet his victory over them was decisive; his audience was Jerusalem, Ephesus, Antioch, Corinth, Athens, and Rome—not they alone, but antiquity, the Middle Ages, and modern times; his reward was that he himself was crowned with the aureole of sanctity, and covered with the applause of peoples and countries, of earth and of heaven. "We are made a spectacle to the world, and to angels, and to men."[3]

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[1] 1 Cor. 4:9. [2] *Ib.* [3] *Ib.*

What was it that gave this fight its particular charm? It was the *courage* with which it was fought.

I

The young warrior needed courage in an extraordinary degree, for his *difficulties* were very great. "Our flesh had no rest, but we suffered all tribulation: combats without, fears within." [4]

1. *"Fears within!"*

Paul, so insignificant and weak even in body, worried with sickness, and at the same apparently so little suited from a spiritual point for an apostle, had become a *guilty one*. "And when the blood of Stephen thy witness was shed, I stood by and consented, and kept the garments of them that killed him." [5] Moreover, he was saturated with acquired *prejudices* beyond measure: "I am a Pharisee, the son of Pharisees." [6] He was also entangled in the conflict of passions as only mortal man can be: "But I see another law in my members, fighting against the law of my mind." [7] And this conflict gave him much to do, "For the good which I will, I do not; but the evil which I will not, that I do." [8] Gladly he would have struggled up to the height: "I consent to the law, that it is good," [9] "For I am delighted with the law of God, according to the inward man." [10] But he found that "to will, is present with me; but to accomplish that which is good, I find not." [11]—All struggling was in vain; the slope was too steep; there was a constant

[4] 2 Cor. 7:5. [5] *Ib.* 23:6. [8] *Ib.* v. 19. [10] *Ib.* v. 22.
[6] Acts 22:20. [7] Rom. 7:23. [9] *Ib.* v. 16. [11] *Ib.* v. 18.

sliding backwards towards the abyss. Inaccessibly high above him was his aim. It was a painful discovery that "the law is spiritual; I am carnal, sold under sin." [12] At last we hear the despairing confession: "For I know that there dwelleth not in me, that is to say, in my flesh, that which is good." [13] And the touching lament: "Unhappy man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" [14]

In addition to all this, "there was given me a sting of my flesh, an angel of Satan, to buffet me," [15] and "For which thing thrice I besought the Lord, that it might depart from me," but "He said to me: My grace is sufficient for thee." [16]

There were certainly fears within, and yet this man was to struggle up to the highest sanctity, and to lift an entire multitude up from sin. Is it surprising that he was often overcome by despondency?

2. *"Combats without!"*—He was to win the world again to Christ: but here again there were great difficulties. The great world was under the ban of *paganism.* Civil life, schools, science and art, public, family, and private life—all of them were ruled by it.

Judaism was an almost even greater enemy, caught and petrified in acquired prejudices, and recently hardened into hatred and enmity to Christ. Even in *Christianity* itself there were opponents. He, the former persecutor, was received with mistrust, suspected as an innovator, and called to question on all sides because of his views. Then there were fights against sorcerers like Elymas, with heathen tyrants,

[12] *Ib.* v. 14.
[13] *Ib.* v. 18.
[14] *Ib.* v. 24.
[15] 2 Cor. 12:7.
[16] *Ib.* vv. 8, 9.

such as the silversmith Demetrius, with doctors of the law, with pious and noble women, even with false brethren and with other apostles.

The servant of God had to withstand not only fights, but also *persecutions.* He was persecuted at once in Damascus, so that only flight by being let down from the wall in a basket could save him. There were the storms at Antioch[17] and Iconium,[18] in Lystra,[19] Thessalonica,[20] the scourging and imprisonment in Philippi,[21] the uproars in Ephesus,[22] Jerusalem,[23] and, lastly, the imprisonment in Rome. To all this were added the hardships and the dangers of his journeys. "In many more labours, in prisons more frequently, in stripes above measure, in deaths often. Of the Jews five times did I receive forty stripes, save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once I was stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I was in the depth of the sea. In journeying often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils from my own nation, in perils from the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils from false brethren. In labour and painfulness, in much watchings, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness." [24]

And then: "Besides those things which are without: my daily instance, *the solicitude for all the churches.*" [25] Often the old pagan views threatened to choke the seed he had sown among the communities; often false teachers threatened to sow tares among the corn, often pharisaic and Jewish, or Gnostic errors; and oriental mystic fanaticism threatened to destroy the whole of

[17] Acts 13:50.
[18] *Ib.* 14:5.
[19] *Ib.* v. 18.
[20] *Ib.* 17:8.
[21] *Ib.* 16:23.
[22] *Ib.* 19:23.
[23] *Ib.* 21:27.
[24] 2 Cor. 11:23-27.
[25] *Ib.* v. 28.

Christendom. What a dreadful "solicitude for all the churches"!

If when he was so hard pressed, he could have only found comfort at least *in the bosom of the faithful*—but even there he had hard trials. Even though he was loved in the beginning, rivals soon enough sought to supplant him, and envious persons tried to make things impossible for him. They made fun of his figure, his appearance, his speech; they blamed the tone of his epistles, they blamed his measures, and did not even draw back at doubting and questioning the justice of his mission. They were not without success. He, at first so beloved and admired, had to confess in the end: "Thou knowest this, that all they who are in Asia, are turned away from me." [26]—That, then, was what he reaped after almost twenty-five years' activity in his district. So much seemed to have gone to ruin. Is it surprising, then, that this man who was so severely tried wrote, "We were pressed out of measure above our strength, *so that we were weary even of life.*" [27]

II

And yet he wrote: *"Wherefore we do not lose heart."* [28] Paul kept up his courage!

1. He kept up his *courage in life.* "In all things we suffer tribulation, but are not distressed: we are straitened, but are not destitute: we suffer persecution, but are not forsaken: we are cast down, but we perish not." [29] All these hindrances might oppress him, but they could not overwhelm him. Not infrequently they even augmented his courage. "And some out of con-

[26] 2 Tim. 1:15.
[27] 2 Cor. 1:8.
[28] *Ib.* 4:16, W. V.
[29] *Ib.* vv. 8, 9.

tention preach Christ not sincerely: supposing that they raise affliction to my bands. But what then? So that by all means, whether by occasion, or by truth, Christ be preached: *in this also I rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.*" [30] And from his very weakness he drew new strength. "Gladly therefore *will I glory in my infirmities,* that the power of Christ may dwell in me. For which cause I please myself in my infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ. *For when I am weak, then am I powerful.*" [31] Of course those times of spiritual enthusiasm gave way again to similar periods of melancholic exhaustion, and of painful home-sickness, to times "having a desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ, a thing by far the better" [32]; but even if then the *pleasure* of life was diminished, the *will and courage for life* remained. "But to abide still in the flesh, is needful for you. And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide, and continue with you all, for your furtherance and joy of faith." [33]

2. The Apostle's *courage in action* also remained unbroken. He struggled untiringly for *personal perfection* in spite of all temptations: "Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended. But one thing I do: forgetting the things that are behind, and *stretching forth myself to those that are before, I press towards the mark, to the prize of the supernal vocation of God in Christ Jesus.*" [34] And in this his goal was not any mere mediocrity of virtue, but the first prize: "Know you not that they who run in the race, all run

[30] Philip. 1:17, 18. [31] Philip. 1:23. [32] *Ib.* 3:13, 14.
[33] 2 Cor. 12:9, 10. [34] *Ib.* vv. 24, 25.

indeed, but one receiveth the prize? So run that you may obtain." [35] It was a goal that he strove for with no empty longing, but by daily self-denial, fights and struggles: "And everyone that striveth for the mastery, refraineth himself from all things: and they indeed that they may receive a corruptible crown; *but we an incorruptible one. I therefore so run,* not as at an uncertainty: I so fight, not as one beating the air: but I chastise my body and bring it into subjection: lest perhaps when I have preached to others, I myself should become a castaway." [36]

Indefatigable also was his work for Christ's *kingdom:* "But in all things let us exhibit ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in tribulation, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in prisons, in seditions, in labours, in watchings, in fastings, in chastity, in knowledge, in long-suffering, in sweetness, in the Holy Ghost, in charity unfeigned, in the word of truth, in the power of God; by the armour of justice on the right hand and on the left; by honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report; as deceivers and yet true, as unknown, and yet known." [37] With what strength and skill he devoted himself to the propagation of the Gospel! He used the whole armour of faith as a "soldier of Christ," and as a "preacher of the word" boldly flung the new Gospel of God against all delusions. As a "wise architect" he erected powerful buildings against the bulwarks of Belial; untiring in his warning and comforting, he performed his duties everywhere as a "minister of the Church." He was animated with such a will to conquer, that as an "apostle of Christ" he erected Christ's standard in all

[35] 1 Cor. 9:24. [36] *Ib.* vv. 25-27. [37] 2 Cor. 6:4-8.

countries; with motherly love, as the "high priest ordained for men," he turned his love to all new converts.

3. Unconquerable too was his *courage in sacrifice*. "*Even unto this hour* we both hunger and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no fixed abode; and we labour, working with our own hands." [38]

4. Wonderful too was his *magnanimity*. "But I most gladly will spend and be spent myself for your souls; although *loving you more, I be loved less.*" [39]

People did all they could against him; from all sides the spray of hatred and envy spurted up at him, and he did not become weak. All this was unable to extort a thought of resentment from him. He stood high on the rocks, and spread his hands in blessing over all who cursed and resisted him. "We are reviled, and we bless; we are persecuted, and we suffer it. We are blasphemed, and we entreat." [40]

III

Whence did he, who had previously been blind and a persecutor of the Church, draw his strength? "And such confidence we have, through Christ, towards God. Not that we are sufficient to think anything of ourselves, as of ourselves: *but our sufficiency is from God:* who hath made us fit ministers of the new testament." [41] Paul was a marvel of God's *grace*. Where does the all-powerfulness of this heavenly force stand out more than in him in whom it "commanded the light to shine out of darkness"? [42]

[38] 1 Cor. 4:11, 12. [40] 1 Cor. 4:12, 13. [42] *Ib.* 4:6.
[39] 2 Cor. 12:15. [41] 2 Cor. 3:4-6.

"The charity of Christ presseth us."[43]—This was a second reason for his zeal. Christ's love burned brightly in Paul's heart, and therefore no opposition could stop him. "In all these things we overcome, *because of him that hath loved us.*"[44] And so even sufferings became a joy to him in the thought. "Always bearing about in our body the mortification of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our bodies. For we who live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake; that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our mortal flesh."[45]

No less was it the love for the poor *souls* who were threatened and whom God had committed to him, that urged him on: "Therefore I endure all things *for the sake of the elect,* that they also may obtain the salvation, which is in Christ Jesus, with heavenly glory."[46] For it was a question of their all, of eternal salvation, and this after all redounded to the honour of Almighty God. "For all things are for your sakes; that the grace abounding through many, may abound in thanksgiving *unto the glory of God.*"[47]

May he himself, then, not hope for grace on the future day of Christ's coming?—"For what is our *hope,* or joy, or crown of glory? Are not *you,* in the presence of Our Lord Jesus Christ *at his coming? For you are our glory and joy.*"[48]

At the same time he knew that *God was near him:* "We should not trust in ourselves, but in God who raiseth the dead. *Who hath delivered and doth deliver us out of so great dangers: in whom we trust that he will also deliver us.*"[49]

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[43] *Ib.* 5:14. [44] Rom. 8:37. [45] 2 Cor. 4:10, 11. [46] 2 Tim. 2:10. [47] 2 Cor. 4:15. [48] 1 Thess. 2:19, 20. [49] 2 Cor. 1:9, 10.

And if God allowed storms to rage, one thing He did not deny him: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort. Who *comforteth* us in all our tribulation; *that we also may be able to comfort them who are* in all distress, by the exhortation wherewith we also are exhorted by God. *For as the sufferings* of Christ abound in us: so also by Christ doth *our comfort* abound." [50]

And even if this external comfort disappeared for a time, one comfort remained always with him: "For our glory is this, the *testimony of our conscience,* that in simplicity of heart and sincerity of God, and not in carnal wisdom, but in the grace of God, we have conversed in this world: and more abundantly towards you." [51] And there remained the sure guarantee that "though our *outward man* is corrupted, yet the *inward man is renewed day by day.*" [52] And there was the joyful prospect: "For that which is at present momentary and light of our tribulation, worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory." [53]

IV

To conquer at any price—was the Apostle's aim in the gigantic fight which he had to undertake. Did he win?

1. How nobly he came forth from the fight! what faith he showed! "I know whom I have believed." [54] What confidence he had in his new powers: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel. For it is the power of God

[50] 2 Cor. 1:3-5. [52] *Ib.* 4:16. [54] 2 Tim. 1:12.
[51] *Ib.* v. 12. [53] *Ib.* v. 17.

unto salvation to everyone that believeth, to the Jew first, and to the Greek." [55] What an *entire surrender to his new Lord!* "But the things that were gain to me, the same I have counted loss for Christ." [56] What a *certainty of victory* in all his fights! "I can do all things in him who strengtheneth me." [57] What *fidelity* he showed in spite of all sacrifices! "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? . . . . For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor might, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." [58] What *unselfishness* there was in all his work! "What is my reward then? That preaching the gospel, I may deliver the gospel without charge, that I abuse not my power in the gospel. For whereas I was free to all, I made myself the servant of all, that I might gain the more." [59] What great *love* he bore in spite of all hatred! "That I have great sadness, and continual sorrow in my heart. For I wished myself to be an anathema from Christ, for my brethren, who are my kinsmen according to the flesh." [60] What a *confidence* that was, that spoke mockingly to Death: "Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting?" [61] What unbroken conviction of eventual victory that can joyously cry: "But thanks be to God who hath given us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." [62] Moreover, what *extraordinary supernatural graces* he received! "I know a man in Christ above fourteen years ago (whether in the body, I know not,

[55] Rom. 1:16. [56] Philip. 3:7. [57] *Ib.* 4:13. [58] Rom. 8:35ff. [59] 1 Cor. 9:18, 19. [60] Rom. 9:2, 3. [61] 1 Cor. 15:54, 55. [62] *Ib.* 15:57.

or out of the body, I know not: God alone knoweth), such a one caught up to the third heaven." [63]

And what was the gain for Christ's cause? Victory all along the line. Blessing descended from Paul's person and work on all peoples and times: *"As dying, and behold we live; as chastised, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as needy, yet enriching many; as having nothing and possessing all things."* [64]

2. Now the whole Catholic priesthood, like St. Paul, presents a great spectacle in the midst of the world. It was, and is always surrounded by numberless enemies, and still continues to fight the Lord's battles, with fiery courage and powerful strength. It also can say of itself: *"As dying, and behold we live."* [65] It has come forth more glorious than ever from the fights not merely of Roman times, but also from those of the Reformation and the Kulturkampf. *"As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing."* [66] It has always innumerable acts of sacrifice and renunciation to make, immeasureable disappointments to bear, and yet it still has on its lips the Magnificat which was sung in the catacombs by priestly mouths and reddened by their own blood.—*"As needy, yet enriching many."* [67] It always lived in the greatest renunciation: it was poor in power and influence in the world, and yet always poured out over all countries in the world the abundance of its truth, its comfort, its strength, and its grace.—*"As having nothing, and possessing all things."* [68] Very often it was robbed of all possessions, and yet it still possesses in its faith, its means of grace, its hopes of eternity even infinitely greater goods than all possessors and

[63] 2 Cor. 12: 2. [64] *Ib.* v. 9. [65] *Ib.*
[66] *Ib.* 6: 9. 10. [67] *Ib.* v. 10. [68] *Ib.*

kings of this world.—*"We are persecuted, and we suffer it."* [69] It was exposed to greater and more bloody persecutions than ever any earthly power, and yet bore them all with unprecedented courage.—*"We are reviled, and we bless."* [70] It was despised more than all, and repaid all with blessings. It takes to itself the childen of the very man who persecuted it. At death it anoints with holy oil the mouth of the adversary who spoke blasphemies against it, and the hands of him who in writings and novels caused it such unspeakable pain.—*"We are blasphemed, and we entreat."* [71] It is dragged down to the dust in a blasphemous manner by all the world, and yet daily at the altar spreads its hands in prayer over all its opponents. And in spite of many defects, the Catholic priesthood can bear witness to itself that it has kept itself, "in much patience, in tribulation, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in prisons, in seditions, in labors, in watchings, in fastings, in chastity, in knowledge, in long-suffering, in sweetness, in the Holy Ghost, in charity unfeigned, in the word of truth, in the power of God; by the armour of justice on the right hand and on the left; by honour and dishonour, by evil report, and good report; as deceivers, and yet true; as unknown, and yet known." [72]

The priesthood's struggle is indeed a spectacle, but here below it is still like that of St. Paul, a gladiatorial combat, mixed with groans and moans, with blood and tears, but "When Christ shall appear, who is your life, then you also shall appear with him in glory." [73] "Then shall the just stand with great constancy against those that have afflicted them and taken away their labours." [74]

[69] 1 Cor. 4:12.
[70] *Ib.*
[71] *Ib.* v. 13.
[72] 2 Cor. 6:4-8.
[73] Col. 3:4.
[74] Wis. 5:1.

"They shall stand"—full of confidence there shall stand there all the good priests; they shall stand while rocks are rent, the earth bursts, the seas foam, the sun, moon, and stars fall. They shall stand with Christ their King. They shall stand "like Mount Sion . . . they shall not be moved for ever." [75] They shall stand full of confidence.—*"Against those that have afflicted them,"* that is, against all tyrants and scoffers.—*"And that have taken away their labours!"* that is, against all deceivers, writers, orators who so often laid waste their vineyard, who so often robbed from the young heart what the priest's hand had planted there with so much care. "These seeing it, shall be troubled with terrible fear, and shall be amazed at the suddenness of their *unexpected salvation,* saying within themselves, repenting, and groaning for anguish of spirit: *These are they whom we had sometime in derision. . . .* We fools esteemed their life madness and their end without honour. *Behold how they are numbered among the children of God, and their lot is among the saints. Therefore we have erred . . . and the light of justice hath not shined unto us."* [76]

That is the last end of the priesthood, and the crowning of its way of sorrow and of its tearful struggle: then the narrow battlefield will widen into a world arena; then heaven and hell will look down with wonderment on the conquerors; then the priesthood will really become at last a "spectacle to the world, and to angels and to men." Then the much-tried and much-despised priesthood will triumph at last forever, and will not cease singing the eternal canticle: "Thanks be

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[75] Ps. 124: 1. [76] Wis. 5: 2-6.

to God, who hath given us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." [77]

* * *

"Therefore, my beloved brethren, *be ye steadfast and unmovable; always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.*" [78] "And in *nothing be ye terrified* by the adversaries: which to them is a *cause of perdition, but to you of salvation,* and this from God." [79] "For we know, if our earthly house of this habitation be dissolved, that we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in heaven." [80]

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[77] 1 Cor. 15:57.
[78] 1 Cor. 15:58.
[79] Philip. 1:28.
[80] 2 Cor. 5:1.

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